

inevitable that one is in the end left with a stronger impression of the bizarre and intriguing examples rather than any penetrating understanding of the fundamentals. The complete lack of documentation here is at times frustrating—so much of animal behaviour is, by its very nature, ephemeral and elusive, and observations are difficult to repeat sufficiently to become the basis of a sound generalisation. It is claimed, for example (p. 114) that it is 'a fundamental principal in zoology that predators do not hunt in the vicinity of their core area'. Without evidence that this is so, or any explanation of why it should be so, such a statement must join the many in a limbo between fact and speculation that makes behaviour such a difficult subject to penetrate.

G. B. CORBET

Mammals of Thailand, by **Boonsong Lekagul** and **Jeffrey A. McNeely**. Association for the Conservation of Wildlife, 4 Old Custom House Lane, Bangkok 5, US \$49.

To increase your knowledge of Asian mammals, you can do no better than to invest in this splendid book. In 800-plus pages (weighing 3kg) of facts, figures and illustrations it covers 264 mammal species, most of which, despite the title, range far beyond the boundaries of Thailand. The book is of interest and value to anyone interested in the fauna of the Oriental Region.

To those familiar with conservation in SE Asia it will be no surprise to learn that it is the brainchild of Dr Boonsong Lekagul, the distinguished naturalist who has done much to protect and popularise the fauna of Thailand and neighbouring countries; it is surely only a matter of time before his conservation efforts are recognised with a major international award. He and Jeff McNeely have produced a reference work that is not only impressive in its scope but also very readable. After an introduction covering the geological past of Thailand, habitat types, zoogeography and current legislation concerning wildlife, they give a comprehensive introduction to and discussion of all orders and families. Every species is illustrated with either a photograph or drawing, and the text gives detailed information on its taxonomy, distribution (with map), morphology (including dental and cranial characters), and whatever is known about the animal's ecology and behaviour. I am particularly pleased with the section on bats, a group which is often a mystery to the non-specialist and consequently frequently omitted from guides. With its help we are even beginning to make sense of the aerial fauna of Sulawesi!

Fieldworkers and interested amateurs alike will find this book excellent value. It is expensive, but buyers can console themselves with the thought that it is a work of reference that will never be outdated. Jeff McNeely is now hard at work on an even more ambitious (and weightier?) *Mammals of Indonesia* which will certainly prove another 'must' for those fascinated by the wildlife of SE Asia. Better reinforce your bookshelves now!

KATHLEEN MACKINNON

India's Wildlife in 1959–70, by **M. Krishnan**. Bombay Natural History Society, Rs 30.

This volume brings together the author's four reports published in the *Journal* of the Bombay Natural History Society in 1971–2. They were based mainly on his field notes of 12 years, including two final years of intensive ecological survey of wild mammals in peninsular India made possible by a fellowship from the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund. The significance of this 12-year period is that photographic documentation (242 illustrations in this volume, from about 6000 used in the study) was extensively employed as evidence to reinforce observation. Although the author considers that the primary object of the survey was to assess the impact of the changing environment on the wildlife, he gives much original information on the morphology and behaviour of