

Book reviews

Islands in the Bush

Malcolm Coe

George Philip, 1985, £14.95

Kora National Reserve lies in the arid thirlands of northern Kenya, a gasping wilderness of heat-stunned *Commiphora* thickets that echo to the insane braying of yellow-billed hornbills. Constant droughts bleach the landscape to a ghastly silvery grey. The sun glitters on a million cruel thorns and bald granite inselbergs float away into the endless distance—the Islands in the Bush, which gave Malcolm Coe the title for his book.

In 1983 Dr Coe led an expedition to this hostile but hauntingly beautiful land to document the genetic diversity of a wilderness reserve threatened by both the trampling and browsing of domestic stock and plans to dam the Tana River, whose shady banks—overhung with doum palms and magnificent Tana River poplars—form Kora's northern boundary.

Long before Kora was officially gazetted in 1973, it had become famous as the home of 'Bwana Game': George Adamson and his lions. Reintroducing these big cats to the wild may be of little scientific value, but as the author rightly points out, Adamson's efforts in conservation terms are immeasurable, and it is probably true to say that the reserve would not have been established without him.

Malcolm Coe is a natural teacher and, one suspects, a born leader, with the ability to fill others with his own boundless enthusiasm. His account of the expedition is laced with anecdote, incident and humour. During their stay in Kora, he and his team had to contend not only with George Adamson's lions but also the *nyama mdogo*, the numerous smaller but no less formidable residents such as *Pandinus* scorpions, poisonous eight-inch centipedes and burrowing vipers.

An entertaining book, lifted out of the ordinary by Malcolm Coe's deep and genuine affection for Africa's wildlife and landscapes, and the people who wrest such a meagre living from its harsh environment.

Brian Jackman, naturalist, author and journalist

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Wildlife Resources and Economic Development

S.K. Eltringham

John Wiley & Sons, 1984, £24.50

The first thing that strikes one when faced with this book is the enormity of the task—to summarize in about 325 pages all matters relating to wildlife exploitation. Its 16 chapters cover Wildlife and Tourism, Domestication, Ranching, Cropping, and Trade, as well as more general topics such as Population Ecology of Wildlife. It does seem that the sheer breadth of the subject matter has inevitably led to some of the text being out-of-date, and mistakes can be detected. My particular interests are related to wildlife trade, and I was a little concerned to read, in the discussion of CITES controls, that the 'USA have specifically banned the import of any spotted cat skins as a conservation measure'. This statement cannot be supported, since the USA has actively opposed the listing of all spotted cats on the Convention because of their (continuing) trade in bobcat and lynx. Other similar errors have crept into the text, but provided this book is not quoted as a scientific review of the subject and is treated as I assume it is intended—as background reading for undergraduates—then it fills an extremely valuable niche. With a book of this type, the main problem is always going to be that it will become out-of-date probably before it is even printed. The TRAFFIC Bulletin produced by the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Unit produces an enormous amount of data every year, and CITES is revised every 2 years—not to mention commercial aspects, such as the fur industry, which is usually two steps ahead of conservation as well. I very much hope that this book will run into a second edition so that some of the errors can be removed.

John A. Burton

International Wildlife Law

Simon Lyster

Grotius Publications Ltd, 1985, PB £12.00 (US\$17.50),

HB £25.00 (US\$37.00)

Available from Grotius Publications Ltd, Sales Division, Llandysul, Dyfed SA44 4BQ, UK. Add, for postage, £2.40 for European destinations and £4.85 (US\$7.00) to USA by airmail.

This is a splendid handbook on all the major

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