

I trust that those without the knowledge or the proper facilities will not be lured into keeping monkeys; they are *not* pets that the novice should seek to own.

MAXWELL KNIGHT.

Men and Snakes, by Ramona & Desmond Morris. Hutchinson, 50s.

One expects something good from the versatile zoologist Desmond Morris—also an accomplished painter—and his talented wife, and this most interesting and informative production does not disappoint. Aptly described as “not just a book about snakes”, but a discourse “on the odd relationship that has developed between man and snake”, they call urgently for “a more sympathetic attitude towards a much used and much abused but nevertheless absorbing and remarkable creature”. The research entailed in their masterly exposition of a vast subject, world-wide in coverage, must have been tremendous.

The response to a questionnaire addressed to some thousands of juveniles produced some rather gloomy statistics of snake-hate; nevertheless one is aware that increasing numbers of the young generation are more and more taking a keen and very welcome interest in the study of snakes, and this fascinating and thorough account of the reptilian story from every possible aspect is particularly opportune. It should encourage a lively interest in what many still regard as an unwholesome subject, and help to halt some senseless persecution. The presentation is skilful and the illustrations delightful; altogether an attractive, exceptionally readable and highly recommended book.

C. R. S. PITMAN.

Town Fox, Country Fox, by Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald. Deutsch, 25s.

Another of the “Survival” series of books on British animals, this one discusses most aspects of the life of the fox in this country in the author’s familiar easy style. Various writers on the life and habits of the animal are quoted at some length, but on more than one occasion the author expresses his doubts or dissension; and if it is sometimes simply a case of one personal opinion against another, this gives point to his comment that there is still a good deal to be learnt about some details of Reynard’s life. He gives reasons for thinking that the fox is achieving not only “survival” but increase. From the old records, or lack of them, he infers that foxes were nowhere plentiful in this country in the late 18th and early 19th century; with the boom in fox-hunting it became necessary to import thousands from the Continent. The statistics quoted suggest forcibly how numerous the animal is today, not only in the country, but in suburbs and sometimes even well within large towns. There is a bibliography, which, however, *inter alia* omits *The Handbook of British Mammals*.

COLIN MATHESON.

The Harvest That Kills, by John Coleman-Cooke. Odhams, 25s.

There can no longer be any naturalist or farmer in this country, or indeed anyone interested in the countryside, who has not heard something of the arguments about the persistent organo-chlorine compounds such as dieldrin, aldrin and heptachlor. On the other hand, too few people have any real knowledge of the size of the problem, of the great benefits which the use of chemicals has bestowed on mankind in the fight against disease and hunger, and of the ever growing danger which the Nature Conservancy have described as “the poisoning of our whole environment.”

It is to remedy this lack of knowledge and to marshal a host of facts in readable form that Major Coleman-Cooke has written this excellent book. In just over two hundred pages he deals with the first use of DDT against malaria, the agricultural revolution in Britain, and the first public alert following the fox disease in 1959 and the poisoning of pigeons, game and other birds from seed dressings. He follows through the implications of chemical farming from the thin layer of soil on which all life depends to the processed food we eat. A series of valuable tables shows the toxic doses of all the most widely used chemicals, and he describes the work of the various Government Committees and other bodies concerned with the problem—the latest research shows that even the seas round our coasts are contaminated and that the rate of contamination is still increasing. No-one concerned with these great issues should be without the information in this book, which is admirably prefaced by Sir Solly Zuckerman's address to the Association of British Manufacturers of Agricultural Chemicals.

C. FLOYD.

Public Relations in Natural Resources Management, by **Douglas L. Gilbert**. Burgess Publishing Co., Minneapolis, \$2.40.

Young biologists who embark on a career in conservation expect to spend most of their time working with wildlife; they may soon find that more of their time is spent working with people. This remark by Thomas L. Kimball, of the National Wildlife Federation in his Foreword to this book underlines its value.

The author, who is Associate Professor of Wildlife Management in the Colorado State University discusses the application of modern techniques of communication in the field of nature conservation, where the understanding of an informed public is vital if the natural resources of the earth are to be managed in a spirit of trusteeship, and he has tackled his task with much zest. The history of public relations, modern methods of gaining the confidence and goodwill of sportsmen, farmers and other land users—for there is no such thing as 'the public', but rather a host of different publics—the value of press articles, advertising, lectures, films, radio and television, all are briefly discussed in the light of experience gleaned in the United States. Some of the lessons he has mastered are relevant to the situation in Britain.

There are times when this well-documented book seems to labour the obvious. Yet no harm is done by repeating that people should be treated with courtesy and respect, that undue secrecy arouses suspicion, that dissension among naturalists may damage the image of the conservation movement, or that the chairman of natural history organisations should not emulate one who introduced the author with the words "Some guy from the Forest Service is here to show us a film about something."

GARTH CHRISTIAN.

The Birds of the Palaearctic Fauna, by **Charles Vaurie**. Witherby, 12 gns. (Vol. 1, 5 gns.; Vol. 2, 7 gns.).

The second and concluding volume of Charles Vaurie's invaluable synoptic survey of the Palaearctic avifauna has now been published. Volume 1, which appeared in 1959, dealt with the great order of Passeriformes, the perching or song birds. This volume covers all other orders of birds, from the ostriches to the woodpeckers. The information given is for each species and subspecies of its synonymy, habitat and range, both within and without the Palaearctic region, which of course includes North Africa. The first volume when it appeared immediately replaced Dresser's *Manual of Palaearctic Birds*, now over 60 years old, as the standard work on the