

Book Reviews

Problems in Management of Locally Abundant Wild Mammals, edited by P.A. Jewell and S. Holt. Academic Press, £15.50.

This book mostly concerns the arguments that arise in the management of national parks as to whether active intervention or ecological processes should control the numbers of large mammals in them. It arose out of a workshop sponsored by the International Fund for Animal Welfare in Massachusetts in 1980.

We are unlikely to come to any firm consensus on scientific grounds as to whether or not active intervention (which realistically usually means shooting animals) is justified in management. Graeme Caughley, whose paper on 'Over-population' serves to set the scene for the rest of the volume, clearly feels that ecosystems should be left to find their own equilibria. Other distinguished contributors, such as R.M. Laws, who writes on 'Feeding Strategies and Over-abundance', point to the advantages of control in certain circumstances. As Caughley points out, the trend in the last decade has been towards a reduction of intervention, except in southern Africa, where parks are managed fairly heavily. Six of the 19 chapters deal with African cases, both in southern and eastern Africa, and several others refer extensively to that continent, so the reader has a good opportunity to make comparisons.

Besides the chapters on terrestrial herbivores, there are interesting contributions on the leopard, marine carnivores and theoretical issues, but space does not permit further discussion.

This is a book which all wildlife managers should read, and which many ecologists will find of deep interest. The general reader may find its combination of case studies and theory at once both too pragmatic and too theoretical. Nevertheless, I recommend it. The book is economically produced from photo-ready typescript and is good value in today's terms.

NIGEL BONNER

The History of Modern Whaling, by J.N. Tonnessen and A.O. Johnsen. C. Hurst and Co., £19.50.

The original of this excellent English translation by R.I. Christophersen was published in four volumes in the period 1959–70. The present book is a shortened version but is none the less a first-rate account. This history begins in the 1860s when the hunting of the blue whale and all its smaller close relatives, except the minke, began. The steam- and diesel-powered catcher-boats were equipped with a cannon firing an explosive grenade and arrangements to secure and keep afloat the dead whale. It stops a century later as the most recent, and possibly last, phase of Antarctic whaling was beginning – the hunting of minke whales by the Japanese and Soviet expeditions – although data tables and some textual commentary takes us to 1978. There is little either about modern sperm whaling, which features in the current controversy about whaling regulation, or about the small factory-catcher boats which became important in 'pirate whaling' in the 1970s.

The short chapter dealing with the period 1972–78 contains several inaccuracies (an example is the statement that fin whales can now be caught only off Iceland, ignoring the Spanish catching) and is somewhat uncritical of

current practices of the IWC. The authors claim that all quotas are now set 'on a scientific basis' but, in fact, few are.

There is little about the whales themselves except where they were found and how they subsequently 'disappeared'. A depressingly repetitive chronicle is given of the near extermination of one local population after another, of each species, in nearly every corner of the planet. But for information about the evolution of the technology of whaling and of processing carcasses this book is practically unique and extraordinarily informative. If the information it contains about changes in and increases in efficiency of hunting and catching methods had been available in translation earlier, some of the errors in interpretation of whale abundance as 'catch per unit effort' made by IWC scientists might have been avoided.

Of topical interest is a fascinating account of the relation between whaling and problems of sovereignty in the Antarctic. On this, and on other topics of wider interest than whaling, the book sheds much light. It is to be commended highly – to professionals concerned with whales and whaling, to those interested in 'saving' whales and Antarctica, and to those many others who may be ready to be fascinated by this study, in depth, of what is, politically speaking, one of the facets of a colonial expansion, not to dark continents but to the shores of remote seas. In that era the seamen had, the authors tell us, 'their own special geographical distinctions – beyond forty (i.e. south of 40°S) no law, beyond fifty no God'.

SIDNEY HOLT

The Wildlife of Arabia, introduction by **Professor W. Büttiker**. Stacey International, £12.95.

A traveller flying over Arabia could be forgiven for thinking that the vast areas of forbidding terrain below were a lunar landscape, not part of Earth. Naturalists who have studied Arabia's wildlife, as Sir Peter Scott observes in his foreword, are astounded by its diversity of species. Each returns, as Sir Peter recalls, 'with a host of memorable wildlife experiences'. The explanation for this, as explained by Professor Büttiker in his introduction, lies partly in Arabia's unique zoogeographical position. It forms a bridge between two great land masses, Africa and Eurasia, permitting faunal migrations. The desert, surely the harshest environment on earth, has produced its own amazing adaptations of form and function – a veritable crucible of natural selection.

Although technical works exist for specialists, there has been a notable lack of literature for amateur enthusiasts. This book fulfils this requirement admirably. Compiled by an impressive team of acknowledged experts, it is illustrated lavishly with superb colour photographs. The text is readable and informative, with very few technical errors. It will stimulate interest in the wildlife of Arabia and be treasured on the bookshelves of amateurs and specialists alike. The contributors and publishers deserve our congratulations.

DAVID L. HARRISON

Galapagos: Islands Lost in Time, by **Tui de Roy Moore**. George Allen & Unwin, £15.

Tui de Roy, now Mrs Moore, arrived in the Galapagos as a baby and sees the islands as a native, not as a tourist. Her book is the story of a child growing up in the wilderness and learning about nature by direct experience. Later, as she