

immigrants from the north is the Baikal seal, a close relative of the Arctic ringed seal. The book is illustrated with line drawings, maps, diagrams, half-tones and three coloured plates; it has a good index and an extensive bibliography. Professor Kozhov has produced a fascinating account of the history of life of one of the most interesting biological regions of the world.

L. HARRISON MATTHEWS

The Natural History of Flies, by Harold Oldroyd. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 50s.

Centipedes of the British Isles, by E. H. Eason, Warne, 63s.

Ten Little Housemates, by Karl von Frisch. Pergamon Press, 12s. 6d.

The opening volume of a new series, "The World Naturalist," is a splendid piece of popular scientific writing by a leading expert from the British Museum (Natural History), most readable and an excellent precedent for its successors. By "flies," of course, experts mean not just the common house fly and bluebottle, but also all the insects entomologists call Diptera or two-winged flies. The book thus surveys the life and human impact of such diverse insects as mosquitoes, midges, daddy-long-legs, clegs or horse-flies, hoverflies and those terrible pests of farm stock, bots and warble flies.

Messrs. Warne are best known for their admirable "Wayside and Woodland" series, on which all the best British naturalists were brought up, and Dr. Eason's book on centipedes, profusely illustrated with line drawings instead of plates, represents a new departure. The first comprehensive and systematic account of British centipedes and their identification, it describes clearly and succinctly our thirty-two native and eleven introduced species, and will, one hopes, lead to a renewed interest in a group which, if not exactly neglected, has never suffered from a superfluity of students.

Professor von Frisch's little book on the arthropods particularly associated with man now appears in a new English edition. He writes chattily but accurately about the natural history of house flies, gnats, fleas, bed bugs, lice, clothes moths, cockroaches, silver-fish, spiders and ticks. Of these, only the silver-fish are generally harmless to man, and even they can sometimes be too much of a good thing.

R. S. R. FITTER

Checklist of the Birds of Thailand, by Herbert G. Deignan. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., \$1.00.

Thailand is one of the several big countries of South-east Asia where there are no natural history museum, no decent natural history books, and in several cases even no naturalists! This is one of the great difficulties we face in getting things done to conserve the fauna and flora even at the simplest level. Virtually all the pressure and all the interested personnel are from "ex-patriates", outsiders, non-Asians. In exercising such pressure they have left it very late. Much which could easily have been achieved in 1954 has become exceedingly difficult in 1964—coming from outside. Herbert Deignan is one of the few outsiders who has steadily devoted himself to the natural history of this area, and to the birds of Thailand in particular. Now, at last, he has given us a proper scientific background to the ornithology of a large, exciting region. A previous nominal list of Thai birds published in *Ibis* in 1920 listed 732 forms: this checklist lists 1,173.