

shooting is gradually becoming shameful; but nearly everywhere else the grey Atlantic seal is persecuted and its numbers are decreasing.

C. L. B.

SQUIRRELS. MONICA SHORTEN. Collins, 1954. 15s.

This is one of the shorter New Naturalist volumes, and a worthy successor to Ernest Neal's *The Badger*, the only previous book in the series devoted to a single mammal. Miss Shorten's book is actually about two mammals, the native red and the introduced grey squirrel in Britain, and is a very thorough account of their life history, habits and distribution.

There are an extraordinary number of misconceptions about the two British squirrels, and it is one of the book's great merits that it leaves no excuse for their survival. To start with, I was very glad to see Miss Shorten take a firm stand against the misapplication to the grey squirrel of the name tree-rat, which as she points out rightly belongs to quite a different animal, *Rattus rattus frugivorus*. The grey squirrel, hated foreigner though it may be, is a true squirrel, and squirrels, though it may be regrettable to those who think the red squirrel our most attractive wild mammal, can be destructive pests, injurious to the interests of the forester, farmer, gardener, and bird-watcher. Ask any forester in Scotland what he thinks of the red squirrel—and he won't bother to call it a red tree-rat either.

Though it is fairly generally known that the grey squirrel is an introduction from North America, it is much less well known that the red squirrels of both Scotland and Ireland are introduced too, the animal having become extinct in Scotland and perhaps never having inhabited Ireland. Even in Epping Forest it is possible that the red squirrels are not native British ones, but deliberate introductions from the Continent about forty-five years ago.

There is a widespread idea that the grey squirrel has driven out the red in England and Wales, but Miss Shorten shows that there is no certainty about this. What appears to have happened is that the red squirrel, having occupied a habitat that was not its ancestral one of conifer forest, suffered a severe epidemic in the early years of the present century. When it began to recover, the already firmly established grey squirrel prevented it from regaining its former ground. Though there are many eyewitness accounts of red and grey squirrels fighting, with the grey usually winning, there is no reason to suppose that this represents anything more than resistance by the grey to the reoccupation of its former territory by the red.

Both the author and the editors of the *New Naturalist* are to be congratulated on a considerable contribution to the literature of British mammals, which also provides an authoritative refutation of many current myths about squirrels. There are thirty-two excellent black and white photographs, and a number of interesting and informative maps. R. S. R. F.

WINGED THUNDERBOLT. By G. D. ADAMS.
Constable and Co., Ltd. 15s.

This review has two authors, one thirteen years old, the other considerably older. The junior reviewer writes "This is a very exciting book. I didn't know anything about peregrines before, and now I do". The senior reviewer feels that his colleague has made a very fair comment. The book does give a vivid sketch of the wild and wandering life of the peregrine and admirably stresses the tremendous distances in the daily and yearly range of these falcons.

The manner and style is reminiscent of that of Mr. Henry Williamson. Indeed, the description of porpoises and grampus at the mouth of an estuary is so like a passage in "Salar the Salmon" as to suggest an essay in pastiche, if not in précis.

There is a rather unfortunate "howler" on the first page, where it is stated that the albumen of the egg differentiates into the young bird! And is Mr. Adams correct in making his peregrine breed in the first year? Mr. J. Walpole-Bond, in *Field-studies of some rarer British Birds* says that this species does not breed until the second year.

P. T. H.

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SHORTER NOTICE

UGANDA NATIONAL PARKS HANDBOOK, 1954. Published by the Trustees of the Uganda National Parks. Price 5s., from Uganda East African Office, Grand Buildings, Trafalgar Square, W.C. 2.

In addition to the list of animals and plants usually found in guide books, this one contains a very readable introduction to the natural history of the Uganda National Parks. There are chapters also on the geology, geography, and history of the parks.

Scientific information is kept to a minimum for, as the Director rightly says, all such information can be found in reference libraries. Though a map of Uganda is included with the guide book it is merely a road map and gives very little idea of the geography of the region.