

about the devotees of land and freshwater molluscs, of spiders, and of vertebrate groups besides birds. W. N. P. Barbellion is quoted twice, but somehow Mr Allen resists the temptation to tell us that he wrote that most moving of diaries, *The Journal of a Disappointed Man*, besides publishing (under his real name of B. F. Cummings) some pioneer experiments on the orientation of British amphibians. There is no proper bibliography and its absence is only partly relieved by a chapter of notes on sources.

The illustrations include interesting photos, reproductions of old drawings, and attractive contemporary black and white sketches. I found the print tiresomely small and grey. Unfortunately the price, excessive even by modern standards, will prevent many from obtaining this important and engrossing book.

A. d'A. BELLAIRS

Nature in Trust: the history of nature conservation in Britain, by John Sheail. Blackie, £5.95.

It is a sobering experience to see events in which you have taken part treated as history, and to find one's brief notes, penned following a field trip, used as historical documents. This has happened to me in reading John Sheail's chapters on the genesis of the Nature Conservancy and its national nature reserves, for, as secretary of the official committee whose report led to its formation, I took part in many of the field trips to verify that the proposed national nature reserves were still sufficiently unspoiled to be worth recommending.

In many ways this book complements David Allen's *The Naturalist in Britain*, reviewed above, for it leans heavily to the official side of the movement, whereas Allen's book is devoted almost entirely to the unofficial side. This is partly because the official side has left copious documentation about itself, while the documentation of the unofficial side, in so far as it exists, is widely scattered and much less accessible.

However, so far as possible, Dr Sheail covers the ground very thoroughly, from the first stirrings of the modern movement in the mid-19th century down to about 1970. Among other interesting items he disinters the prototype of the Council for Nature: the British Correlating Committee for the Protection of Nature, founded in 1924. This began by taking an interest in the wider world, no doubt under the aegis of the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire, and discussed 'the future of the dik-dik in Africa, whales and various migratory species.' However, it quickly repented of this incipient internationalism, which explains why the SPFE, now the Fauna Preservation Society and the second senior British conservation society (after the RSPB), does not merit even a mention by Dr Sheail.

Nevertheless, the book is a must for those engaged in or interested in the British conservation movement. The eye of a historian, who is himself not a biologist but a geographer, gives a refreshing new look at what we have been doing for the past fifty years or so.

RICHARD FITTER

Rare, Disappearing and Lesser-Known Birds of the USSR, edited by A. S. Rak. (in Russian) Oka State Nature Reserve and Central Laboratory for the Protection of Nature.

This interesting little book, published under the auspices of the Chief Administration for the Protection of Nature, Nature Reserves and the Hunting Economy of the Ministry of Agriculture of the USSR, consists of a three-page introduction and a collection of brief reports by Soviet ornithologists on thirty species of birds—rare, decreasing in numbers, or little known—including red-breasted goose, Siberian white crane, Ross's gull, Pallas's sandgrouse, the red-faced cormorant of the Kurile