

Reports and Journals

Arable and grazing lands together account for more than half the surface of Britain, and, though much of the country has been farmed since the Stone Age, only since the Second World War has agriculture posed a major threat to wildlife. The reason is the industrialisation of food-production: scrub clearance, drainage, chemical fertilisation, pest control, and all the other trappings of the 'unnatural' practice of large-scale, single-crop, mechanised farming. In *Nature Conservation and Agriculture* (19/20 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PY; free) the Nature Conservancy Council estimates that if all farms were modernised (and given present economic pressure, this is not unthinkable) they would lose 80 per cent of their resident bird species, 75 per cent of mammals, 95 per cent of butterflies and virtually all aquatic life. The report offers advice and alternatives to farmers and land managers, a review of sources of further information and assistance, and some basic 'sermons' on ecology.

In NCC's earlier *Second Report, 1975/76* (HMSO, £2.75), problems raised by modern farming can be seen in conservation context in Britain. This report also dwells on these problems, as well as international activities: a summary of Government papers; extensive appendices, including a list of national nature reserves; and NCC advice to the Government on such diverse subjects as motorways, ports, pipelines, badgers, rabies, captive birds, forestry and waterways.

In *Airborne Birds*, a sequel to *All Heaven in a Rage*, the shocking 1975 study of wild-bird imports into the UK, T. P. Inskipp and J. G. Thomas show that the mere existence of new regulations – some of which were a direct result of the first report – does not in itself guarantee new practices. Of 829 cages examined by the RSPB at Heathrow Airport, not one was found to comply with all aspects of International Air Transport Association rules, only 11 per cent were not overcrowded, and in three cages birds were packed in at more than 65 times the recommended density. Page after page of similar statistics offer little hope that, except for conservationists, anyone cares very much about controlling this lucrative trade. (RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds., £1.)

ACAN Volume I, No. 1, published in September 1976, is the journal of the Association des Clubs des Amis de la Nature in Cameroun, started in 1975 by Andrew A. Allo, Director of the Garoua Ecole de Faune (the French speaking equivalent of Mweka in Tanzania). The Clubs are mainly for young people but adults are welcome. The first issue of this lively 34-page journal, duplicated and bound in a coloured cover, includes articles on the Sahel and the Cameroun national parks and reserves.

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