

mammals are hedged about with legal complexities which themselves almost need another explanatory fieldguide to sort out!

'Mammal Watching' is profusely illustrated with helpful hints on recognition of species; from skulls to whale spoutings and bat profiles. There are also many excellent colour photographs (apart from the dead shrew!) and many neat sketches. Altogether a useful source of information, ideas and inspiration, a 'must' for school and field centre bookshelves as well as for the would-be mammal watcher personally.

A first glance at the RSPCA book could be misleading. its title suggests that it might be slightly sentimental in its approach and the 16 rather twee, old-fashioned looking colour plates would enhance that impression. Actually the book is a very readable account of British mammals, species by species; each section written by an experienced research worker. It is thus a very authoritative volume within the space allowed – two or three pages per species; more for important ones like badger (10) and fox (8). The subjects you might expect to dominate an RSPCA book do not unbalance it at all; a dozen or so pages being usefully devoted to pain, poisons and traps at the end of the 242 page volume. It is what it sets out to be; a popular, readable reference book for the family bookshelf.

PAT MORRIS

**Ecology and Behaviour of Neotropical Primates**, volume 1, edited by A.F. Coimbra-Filho and R.A. Mittermeier. Academia Brasileira de Ciencias, Rio de Janeiro, 1981.

Students of primate ecology and behaviour have for long awaited a comprehensive synthesis of information on neotropical primates, so as to learn more about the intriguing forests of Central and South America and their inhabitants, and against which to compare the detailed information already available from Africa and Asia. Such a synthesis is now arriving, thanks to the endeavours of Ademar Coimbra-Filho and Russell Mittermeier, and their collaborators. Two volumes are expected, with sections on Systematics and Conservation flanking the main section on Ecology and Behaviour.

This first volume contains three chapters on Systematics, and eight on Ecology and Behaviour (covering Goeldi's monkey, the night and titi monkeys, squirrel and capuchin monkeys, and sakis, bearded sakis and uakaris). Thus the smallest and largest of the super-family Ceboidea are left to the second volume. The discussion of the higher taxa by Rosenberger is fascinating; in regrouping the genera into two families Cebidae and Atelidae he seems to remove many of the anomalies surrounding the classical division into Callitrichidae and Cebidae, highlighted by the confusing position of *Callimico*, and the differences between *Cebus* and *Saimiri* and the rest of the cebids. The editors' review of species and sub-species is excellent, and the comprehensive set of photographs are particularly useful, although their large size and positioning disrupt the text and make cross-referencing difficult. Rose and Fleagle's review of fossils is equally useful, although we are still no nearer knowing whether this group of primates originated from North America or Africa.

The eight chapters of Ecology and Behaviour have the same nine sub-headings several with the same or similar sub-divisions; topics covered are description of the genus, previous studies, habitat, diet, population dynamics, intra-group social behaviour, reproductive behaviour, expression and communication, and locomotor and postural behaviour. This successful common organization makes life much easier for the reader (especially if these sub-headings are indexed

finally), and the quantity of information collated is very impressive; deficiencies in our knowledge are clearly indicated. A summary of quantitative (and qualitative) data for each genus would be very helpful in Volume 2.

Minor deficiencies concern the lack of running heads to the pages (which impedes quick cross-reference), no references given for the two comprehensive volumes on callitrichids (to which reference is made in the introduction), use of the archaic and confusing term *Anthropoidea*, and use of 'oestrus' (so inappropriate to haplorhine primates, who have emancipated their reproductive behaviour from the rigid hormonal control characterizing other mammals). Otherwise, it is certainly an outstanding volume, which will be invaluable to anyone interested in the neotropics and their primates; the completion of this task is awaited eagerly.

DAVID J. CHIVERS

Copies obtainable from R. Mittermeier, Dept of Anatomical Sciences, SUNY, Stony Brook, N.Y. 11794, USA.

**Nocturnal Malagasy Primates**, by P. Charles-Dominique, H.M. Cooper, A. Hladik, C.M. Hladik, E. Pages, G.F. Pariente, A. Petter-Rousseaux, J.J. Petter and A. Schilling. Academic Press. £19.60.

This book is an integrated collection of papers concentrating on the prosimians of the dry deciduous forest of Western Madagascar; it makes a welcome companion volume to Charles-Dominique's 1977 work on the rainforest prosimians of Gabon. Of the ten papers, one is on climate and vegetation, three are field studies of sympatric prosimian species and four are captive colony studies on various aspects of activity, feeding, marking and reproductive patterns under simulated seasonal variation of light and temperature conditions. These field and laboratory studies are exceptionally well integrated and contain valuable information, although owing to logistic problems beyond the research team's control, the field work was necessarily of limited duration. The two remaining papers (one a posthumous paper by Pariente on light conditions in the natural habitat and another on learning abilities of two prosimian species) are of interest in themselves although of less immediate relevance to the otherwise well-knit work. More discussion would have been valuable – in particular direct comparison with the prosimians of dry deciduous habitat in mainland Africa would have been of use.

The book is well produced with a clear layout and useful figures; in one or two papers the English seems awkward but in general it is a readable work. The main drawback is the price: this is a reference book for the specialist interested in primate ecology and behaviour, not for the naturalist or general conservationist.

KATHERINE HOMEWOOD

**Swift and Enduring**, Cheetahs and Wild Dogs of the Serengeti, by George and Lory Frame. Dutton, New York, \$16.50.

George and Lory Frame, the dust cover tells us, are predator ecologists and this is their first non-technical work. These patient and appreciative observers have set out to give us an intimate account of the day-to-day life of two handsome carnivores but an integral part of their tale is a picture of the day-to-day life of an endearing pair of predator ecologists. Incidentally they also give us a glimpse of the little community of researchers that lived in the Serengeti Research Institute while they pursued their four-year study.