

whole family, and deals only with his first love, the North Atlantic gannet. It is an excellent summary of what is known of its habits and ecology, much of it due to the author himself, and will be welcomed by many who are primarily interested in British or European birds and would find the majestic price of his larger book a deterrent.

Eric Simms's New Naturalist volume on British thrushes is squarely in the mid-twentieth century tradition of summarising the voluminous information that now exists for some of the commonest birds in the British Isles. He deals fully with the six thrushes of the genus *Turdus*, on three of which he has himself done detailed field work, especially around his North London home. The lesser thrushes, such as chats, wheatears, robin and nightingale, are dismissed, not unreasonably, in a single chapter. This is the sort of book that ought to be written every twenty years or so for every major group of British birds. There are numerous excellent black and white photographs by Eric Hosking and others.

RICHARD FITTER

**Wild Geese, by M.A. Ogilvie. T & D Poyser, £7.80.**

Another book from the talented and productive research team of the Wildfowl Trust. Malcolm Ogilvie, who has been with the Trust since 1960, follows his *Ducks of Britain and Europe* (1975) with an equally readable and competent companion volume. Here, in a text which has a similar layout to his book on ducks, he covers the geese of the world, apart from one species, the Hawaiian Goose, omitted on the grounds that it is in many ways an aberrant species and is the subject of a monograph which (we all hope) is about to be published. For a volume which rightly emphasises comparisons between species this was, I think, a mistaken decision. However, this is a minor quibble, for the book is an excellent compilation and précis of the vast amount of work that has been done. What is known about geese is here, in chapters on classification, identification, ecology, breeding, status, distribution, population dynamics, migrations, exploitation and conservation. Much of the work has been done in America and Europe, and where there are gaps in our knowledge it is mainly with Asian species. The text is supported by extremely good maps, easy-to-follow tables and index, line drawings, and 16 colour plates. I regret the omission of references in the text, for though there is a selected bibliography of some 200 references at the end, it is difficult and often impossible to check the information given.

There have been at least five other major works dealing with geese and other wildfowl in the last four years, but comparisons would be invidious and unfair for they are aimed at different audiences. Suffice to say if you have a sum approaching £100, buy the lot. If not, and geese are your particular interest, this volume is excellent value.

PETER OLNEY

**The Art of Survival, by Colin Willock. Deutsch, £6.50.**

Television, like the wild world outside, can be a savage habitat at times, red in tooth and claw. But thanks to the consistent excellence of Colin Willock's wildlife programmes, Anglia TV's *Survival* series has secured a permanent niche in the ratings pyramid, and earned over 30 awards in the process.

For nearly two decades Colin Willock has been scripting and producing *Survival* specials for TV. His first film focused on the wildlife of London. Since then he has worked on all kinds of creatures from geckos to humpback whales, and helped to make places such as Aldabra, Chitawan, Okavango and the Serengeti as familiar as the pavements of WC1. Now, with 300 films behind him, he has become *Survival's* chronicler. His book is basically the saga of a dedicated bunch of cameramen and women, and the extraordinary risks they take to bring the animal world to our TV screens. By virtue of

their demanding vocation they are themselves professional survivors. Dieter Plage lived *inside* an active volcano in Zaire; Alan Root took his camera for a swim with the hippos—and got a hole in the leg for his trouble. It's a hazardous business, and has already cost the life of one brave camerawoman, Lee Lyon, killed by an elephant in Rwanda, and now the talented John Pearson, accidentally shot while filming in the Ngorongoro Crater last year.

All the *Survival* superstars are here: Boadicea, the formidable old matriarch elephant of Manyara; Casimir the gorilla, and Fred, the sandhill crane who thought he was human. And for every creature bounding across the silver screen there is inevitably a larger-than-life character behind the camera—John Buxton, for instance, who wouldn't dream of setting out on a rhino-catching safari without his dinner jacket.

A hugely enjoyable story, told with great verve and humour, and a worthy tribute to one of the most effective weapons in the armoury of fauna preservation.

BRIAN JACKMAN

**Jim Corbett's India**, stories selected by **R.E. Hawkins**. Oxford University Press, £4.95.

This 250-page volume is a selection of stories and extracts from Jim Corbett's five books on India, three on the hunting of man-eating tigers and leopards and two on his life among the hill people of Kumaon. A most interesting introduction provides an insight into Corbett's family background and how his books came to be published. There is little one can add to the tributes that have been paid to the books: they are now regarded as classics of their kind. Those on the hunting of man-eaters are unsurpassed for their excitement and suspense, while the ones on his life in the hills, with their delightful undercurrent of folk and animal lore, reflect his great love for and understanding of the hill people. All gain in effect by the simple and unaffected manner of their telling. A selection has necessarily to leave out a great deal more than it can include; to those not already acquainted with Corbett, this book will whet their appetite and lead them to the best story of all on the Talla Des man-eater, when he went out on what he feared might be a fatal last test of skill and endurance. Mr Hawkins has tried, at some lengths, to dispel the suggestion that Corbett's writings were not his own. I can only say that to those truly familiar with the Indian wildlife scene, and the Kumaon Hills in particular, it never occurred either to debate the truth of his stories or that he wrote them, albeit with his sister Maggie's counsel. The late E.P. Gee who, in his time, occupied the number one spot of wildlife expert in India, in his book not only gave Corbett credit for originating the effort to conserve India's wildlife, but also vested the Kumaon Hills with immortality because of their association with him. Corbett was an extraordinary man, and this selection of his writings gives more than a glimpse of his rare qualities as a hunter and as a human being.

B. SESHADRI

## IUCN Publications

The proceedings of two specialist group meetings have been published by IUCN (Morges, Switzerland): *Otters*, the first working meeting in Suriname, March 1977, compiled and edited by the Group Chairman, Nicole Duplaix; and *Threatened Deer*, the 1977 meeting, which includes a dossier (14 papers) on the planning of restoration programmes for threatened mammals with special reference to deer; 13 papers are concerned with individual endangered species.