

part of the achievement. Mrs. Ann Wilton's delightful line-drawings of Malayan beasts, birds, and insects are excellent and some of them masterpieces: her pair of seladang, facing p. 95, is the first entirely satisfactory drawing of this beast I have seen.

E. O. S.

LIVING WITH REPTILES. By KATHLEEN PICKARD-SMITH. Nelson. 18s.

This account of the experiences of the author, over some dozen years, of keeping reptiles and amphibians, is one for the pet-keeper rather than the serious herpetologist. However, it is fair to say that the book contains much information—mostly gained from first-hand experience—which could be useful to amateurs and professionals alike.

The style is narrative which makes for easy reading, but in a book of this length one rather misses some degree of specialized paragraphs with appropriate headings. There is an index; but this is limited to species, which is a pity, especially as only scientific names are given. It is quite right and proper to have these, but the novice who is not familiar with scientific nomenclature may be confused and even put off by not being able to find any common or popular names. One error in the index strikes the eye: *Rana edulis* instead of *Tana esculenta*.

Having made these somewhat critical points it should be made quite clear that this is a book well worth having on one's shelves. Nearly all the information is founded on personal experience, and a great deal of common sense is shown in connection with the feeding and keeping of the many species dealt with. There are flashes of fun and humour which are often lacking in books on animals.

The illustrations are excellent and deserve special mention.

M. K.

THEY WENT TO BUSH. By W. B. COLLINS. Macgibbon and Kee, 25s.

The greater part of this book is a personal account of the author's life as a forest officer in Ghana and of the men with whom he worked. This will be of rather doubtful interest to the ordinary reader who will, however, not be worried by the odd inaccuracies which may annoy Mr. Collins' former colleagues. The final chapter, "Guarding the Game", is more important, and it merits attention, for Collins states plainly what some of us were forbidden to point out before World War II—that the game reserves were a farce and had never existed except on paper.

It is rather frightening to find that a former Governor admitted in writing that he had little or no information as to the game animals which were found (in the so-called reserves) or the extent to which they were being destroyed. The officers administering the districts in which the reserves were situated could have told him very quickly!

The game has disappeared for ever from most of the savannah woodland that covers the northern two thirds of Ghana and it is only within the past few years that the first sizeable game reserve has been effectively established, and it is doubtful whether it can ever become a major tourist attraction.

The slaughter in the forest zone goes on, with almost unlimited shot guns in the hands of the local people and with night-hunting by the use of head-lamps a deadly and indiscriminate method employed by nearly everyone. It will be generations before close seasons and the prohibition of shooting females and young can have any effect but, as Collins emphasizes, it is quite feasible to make the existing Forest Reserves into game sanctuaries, for they are already well demarcated and thoroughly patrolled. They will at least serve as breeding refuges for the duikers, bongo and other shy ungulates which are perhaps less known than other African animals.

G. S. C.

FLY, VULTURE. By MERVYN COWIE. Harrap. 21s.

This book does not, as one might at first suspect, furnish the reader with a detailed description of Kenya's national parks, for it is mainly the autobiography of Mervyn Cowie who became their first director. He relates the part that he played in the events leading up to their formation in 1945, commencing with accounts of some of his rather abortive attempts at hunting dangerous game, and describes how his heart turned from that of a hunter to that of a preservationist. He gives full credit to all those other people in Kenya who played a major rôle in the cause for wildlife preservation which ultimately resulted in the formation of the Kenya National Parks, albeit thirty years later than they should have been formed. As the author points out, he received a great deal of criticism for apparently attempting to glean all the honour for this feat in the film "Where No Vultures Fly", and one feels that perhaps this book was written partly to vindicate this. There is no doubt that he had to deal with some pretty unreasonable people in his time, not an uncommon thing in the petty bureaucracies of colonial territories, and what does emerge is his great determination and resourcefulness in overcoming the obstacles that beset him, and such qualities are likely to incur enemies in any quarter. In the space of a few years he built the parks up from a single empty office to the efficient organization that they are to-day, although he has perhaps imposed some rather too heavy-handed legislation making some of the areas into places where the genuine visitor almost fears to tread. The accounts of pre-war life in Kenya make enjoyable and interesting reading but the value of the book could have been increased by making it a bit more factual all through, and more dates would have helped to make things clearer. Finally it is a pity that it could not have waited to include an account of the author's recent vitriolic attack on the Kenya Government's weak-kneed game policies at the Arusha Conference, when he criticized the 1956 Game Policy Committee's report. Further, he makes no mention of the fact that he was the first to introduce American Fulbright Research Scholars to the study of East African wildlife, although Kenya has lagged sadly behind in the scientific sphere ever since. Such facts may have little appeal to the general reader but this is after all the only available book dealing with the history of the Kenya parks by the person most qualified to write it.