

we would have liked to see included, and indeed some newly found sites have been recommended for grade 1 status even since the publication of this book – I walked over one only last May. Dr Ratcliffe and the NCC are to be congratulated on a good job. Only the unregenerate bureaucrats who caused the delay in publication should be criticised.

There is one last fly in the ointment. In commending these volumes to the public, the Secretaries of State for Environment and for Education and Science, Peter Shore and Shirley Williams, say that neither the Government nor landowners are committed to any action on particular sites mentioned in the text. This may be a political necessity at present, but it is up to the wildlife conservation movement to make it an equal political necessity for the Government to commit itself, quite soon, to the safeguarding of the great majority of these sites. What would be said if the Government issued an illustrated catalogue of the Crown jewels or the National Gallery, and then said it was not in any way committed to safeguarding them from vandalism or theft?

RICHARD FITTER

Konrad Lorenz, by A. Nisbet. Dent £5.95.

There can be hardly anyone remotely interested in animals who has not heard the name of Konrad Lorenz. Here now is an excellent opportunity to learn more of the 'human substance at the centre'. This is no mere adulation of a latter-day St Francis, but a determined attempt to understand and explain a man and his work, both of which can be penetrating and amorphous, fascinating and irritating, humble and arrogant – but always stimulating. There are those who genuinely cannot understand why Lorenz shared a Nobel Prize with such outstanding experimental biologists as Tinbergen and von Frisch, who were puzzled when eminent scientists like Kramer, von Holst and Koehler worked so hard to create an academic niche for him. This book distils, on the whole successfully, and evaluates the essential Lorenz from the lengthy papers and the philosophical books so long in gestation.

Lay readers will still find the exposition of ethology and Lorenz's seminal contribution somewhat hard going, and will delight more in the many and amusing anecdotes about the ebullient phenomenon that is Lorenz the man. They will also, regrettably, fasten on the chapter dealing with the notorious 'nazi' paper of 1940, and on the more recent acceptance from an extreme right-wing group of the Schiller Prize. These issues are not baulked, but they are convincingly dismissed as being the result of a certain political and social naivety. In the account of the later years there is a running refrain of things left undone that might have been done. No goose book has appeared to complement the jackdaw-oriented *King Solomon's Ring*. The Seewiesen establishment is not thought to have produced scientific results comparable to the time and effort involved. But Lorenz is only human, and it is fitting that the book ends with a sentimental account of the Return of the ageing Prophet to his native land and a report of his determination to live for longer than the 92 years achieved by his father.

G. V. T. MATTHEWS

The Mammals of Pakistan, by T. J. Roberts. Benn, £35.00.

This new and comprehensive book will be welcomed as a modern work of reference by specialists in the field and by all naturalists interested in the fauna of Pakistan. It is liberally illustrated with text figures which are accurate and useful as well as artistically pleasing. The distribution maps for each species in Pakistan are especially welcome, as is the comprehensive bibliography and geographical gazetteer. The text is well written and concise, and includes information on the taxonomy of each species, descriptive notes, distribution, status and biological notes.

Unfortunately the taxonomy employed by the author is in places outdated, revealing a tendency to ignore the results of recent researchers and adhere to Ellerman and Morrison Scott's Palaearctic Checklist, compiled more than 25 years ago (e.g. *Eptesicus isabellinus* page 66). At times too the author seems not to understand the fundamental rules of zoological nomenclature – how can *Allactaga euphratica*, properly named in 1881, possibly be a 'synonym' (page 245) of *Allactaga williamsi*, named in 1897? In fact the latter is a valid subspecies of the former.

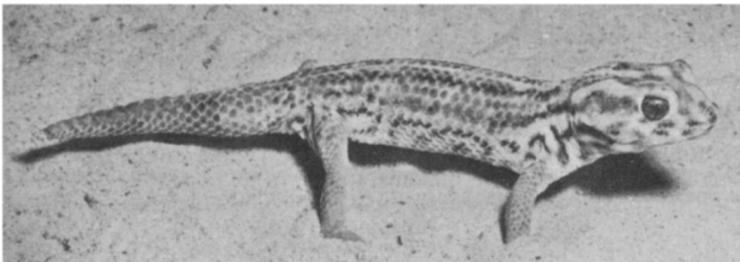
However, these are but minor criticisms of a work which will be immensely valuable to all in the field of mammalogy for many years to come. It will be greatly treasured in this reviewer's bookcase and both the author and publishers are to be congratulated on a first class production. The price may be high, but no true student of mammalogy can afford to be without it.

DAVID L. HARRISON

The Scientific Results of the Oman Flora and Fauna Survey 1975. Journal of Oman Studies, Special Report. Michael Rice, 1 Lowther Gardens, Prince Consort Rd, London SW7 2AA, O. rupees 5; US \$10.

One could wish that all the leaders of developing countries would think as the Sultan of Oman writes in his excellent foreword to this book: 'Through rapid development, terrible mistakes have been made in the world. All development should be directed towards the rational use of the world's resources to obtain the best possible quality of living . . . Conservation goes hand-in-hand with development to achieve this goal'. The Sultan's support and assistance made possible the 1975 survey of the plants and animals of the area containing the Jabal Akhdar National Park, in the mountains of Oman, and this report on the survey is the basic material for conservation in Oman as well as a valuable reference work for everybody interested in deserts. It is carefully documented, well written and illustrated and beautifully produced – a pleasure to handle. It is the first reasonably comprehensive study of the 10,000 ft Jabal Akhdar massif, which has water, trees and habitations above 6000 ft, and the report covers mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibia, freshwater fishes, butterflies and moths, scorpions, molluscs and plants, with a brief account of ectoparasites from mammals. There is nothing on beetles.

The expedition consisted of five naturalists led by David Harrison, who opens with a description of the 59 mammal species obtained, and a checklist of Oman mammals. It lasted a mere month and was forced to concentrate on collecting and listing, but the report goes well beyond that. Thus, M. D. Gallagher's ornithological account includes background material on history, climate, geology and landform and the zoogeographical aspects of the region's birds. It includes, also, a checklist covering all records for the area. Of the 71 species recorded, 40 were for the first time. The area is of course a crossroads for migrants, and 41 species were on passage. Bonelli's eagle is believed to breed on the jabal and the short-toed eagle may breed further west. There is some challenge to the idea that the desert steppes of Arabia form a serious barrier to northerly movement from Ethiopia. Major Gallagher was obviously a tower of strength, for he collected mammals, reptiles, molluscs and lepidoptera as well as birds.



Teratoscincus scincus. This photograph by E. N. Arnold, taken in 1976, was the first record of this skink in Arabia. Reproduced from the Oman Survey Report. British Museum (N.H.).