

The Andes, by Tony Morrison. Time-Life, £4.95.

The Andes is another in Time-Life's series of 'The World's Wild Places', and keeps up the very high standard of photography for which all their books are renowned. It is based on a journey by the author down the entire length of South America from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, the northern end of the mountain chain in Colombia, to southern Patagonia where the cold, barren, snow-clad Andes fall into the sea, only 100 miles north of Cape Horn.

Coffee-table books of this sort will often be bought for their pictures alone, which would be a pity in this case since the text is well worth reading. It is attractively written and gives a vivid impression of the wide range of mountain habitats to be found in the Andes; between each of the chapters is a section of photographs with brief text which are intended to illustrate some particular theme of Andean natural history. This rather disjunct approach perhaps makes the book rather more useful as an introduction to this fascinating region than as a reference book. Certainly it is a book to be read rather than dipped into, and some of the photographs require textual explanation, particularly that on page 124 labelled 'unidentified plant'! Altogether this is an excellent introduction to one of the world's most dramatic wild places.

A. H. FITTER

Large Mammals and a Brave People: subsistence hunters in Zambia, by Stuart A. Marks. University of Washington Press, \$15.

When our colonial hunters killed their trophies in Africa there was scant acknowledgment to local expertise. At best these other experts, whose communities had been in the business of hunting African animals even longer, came along as 'faithful bearers' or mere 'boys'. Currently, although moods are different, and the sport is considered less admirable, we are still uninterested in local practice. Anyone who kills anything is today a 'poacher'. Stuart Marks has set out to put the record straight. He wished to examine, with the methods that any behaviourist might choose, the particular predator named Man. There is great (and justified) talk these days of this species being the destroyer, but Professor Marks wanted to record a kind of predation that was simpler, gentler, more traditional in its manner and less wholesale in its effect. He chose for his study the Valley Bisa people of the Luangwa valley in central Zambia. After learning something of the Nyanja and Bemba languages he and his wife spent 14 months on location in 1966/67 and a further period in 1973. One result is this very serious book, crammed with information, that reminded me frequently of George Schaller's *The Mountain Gorilla*.

Professor Marks says his approach was eclectic. I suppose every author would make that point whenever unused files remain unused, but it is not a word that springs readily to mind when working through this book. It is a relief to read near its end: 'Defining the characteristics of all cultural and environmental variables is beyond the capacity of a single investigator in a short field study'. Nevertheless, the charts, lists, translations, genealogies, appendices, comparisons, data sheets and so forth give ground for the suspicion that he was trying to achieve that goal. There is occasional leaven, such as one tale about elephants. Wives are expected to restrict their behaviour during their husbands' long absences on elephant-hunting expeditions, but, in any case, their husbands can see from the quarry whether all is well back home: an elephant lying down indicates a death, copulation suggests adultery, and all odd behaviour compels an immediate return to discover its cause.

Considering the importance of man as a natural predator in the normal situation it is strange how infrequently this has been studied. Stuart Marks tells how ecologists and conservationists were 'aloof and unfeeling' towards problems involving people. He therefore, most vigorously, tried to fill the gaps and is, presumably, still doing so. His associate professorship is of Anthropology and Environmental Studies, a joint