

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.

Anyone who has witnessed Mervyn Cowie addressing a public meeting in his rather deliberate and imperious manner will find it hard to imagine him as the man who once sat and chatted with the old Masai, Lindolei, round his camp fire, or as the person who sat on the floor of the passage outside the Land Officer's office in Nairobi and refused to move until his request was met with. He can justly claim to have been a sit-downer nearly twenty years before certain extremist elements in England decided to adopt this method of being noticed!

C. A. S.

SIMBA. By C. A. W. GUGGISBERG. Bailey Bros. and Swinfen. 42s.

The author has taken infinite pains, supported by much careful research, to place on record what must be the most comprehensive account which has ever been compiled of the history, distribution, attributes and habits of the lion. Both informative and instructive it is moreover beautifully illustrated with his own photographs, some in colour, showing many aspects of the lion's day-to-day life. He is to be congratulated on the result. In fact he can claim 25 years' first-hand study of the lion in its wild state. A reviewer familiar with the subject is apt to be critical, but *Simba* has nothing to fear on this score.

Much of what is recorded about behaviour is derived from Mr. Guggisberg's patient, meticulous observations made over a period of years in the Nairobi National Park, in Kenya, when he was most ably assisted by his wife, not infrequently in circumstances of considerable difficulty.

The author refers to a widely prevalent idea that "Photographs of lions taken from a car in a game reserve, cannot be considered as proper nature documents". On the contrary the reviewer agrees with Mr. Guggisberg that an unmolested animal in a reserve is far more natural than what is often the furtive, frightened beast without.

He also quotes from Stevenson-Hamilton's Kruger National Park experience, which has been corroborated elsewhere, that "lions increase in proportion to the animals on which they feed"; and thus Nature regulates lion populations. One of the most illuminating passages, which all prospective big game hunters should particularly heed, concerns the dynamics of the lion's charge. It is probable that the functional changes described are equally operative in the cases of most wild animals and this will tend to explain the tenacity of life exhibited momentarily or temporarily by a stricken creature, which can be so very dangerous when it happens to be an African buffalo—at times perhaps the most tenacious of all.

*Simba* ranks as one of those books which once started is hard to put down. It has a valuable bibliography which covers eleven pages.

The style would have been improved had certain irritating solecisms—such as "big cats", "yellow cats", and "yellow killers", if these can be so described—been omitted. The present-day competition from certain less expensive wild animal books of outstanding excellence suggests that a price of forty-two shillings is too high.

C. R. S. P.