

Book reviews

Extinct Birds

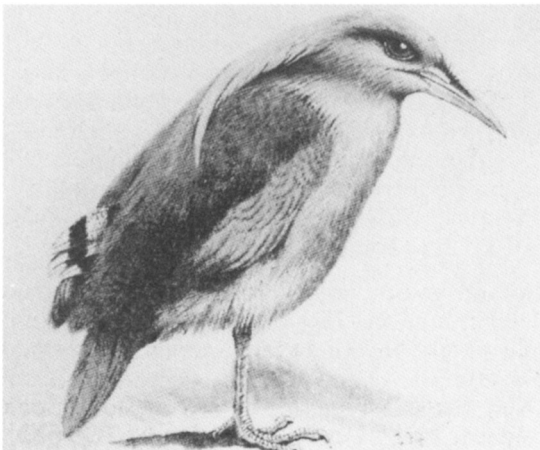
Errol Fuller

Viking/Rainbird, London, 256pp., HB £20.00

Firstly, I must make it absolutely clear that this is a very useful, and well-researched book, which deserves to find a place on the shelves of any reasonable conservation-orientated library. The author may well have cringed when he read the publisher's jacket 'blurb' claiming it to be the first complete survey since Walter Rothschild's classic work of 1907, which was no doubt in deference to Miriam Rothschild who wrote the foreword. In his preface the author correctly acknowledges the importance of J. C. Greenway's *Extinct and Vanishing Birds of the World* (1958)—although he appears to be unaware that a revised edition was published in 1967. A similar anomaly is that the clearing up of the mystery of *Aplonis mavomata* as recently as 1986 is included—an obscure starling from the Pacific—but the much more widely noticed rediscovery of Jerdon's courser in 1985 (photos published in 1986) is missed. However, anyone who has ever tried to compile similar data will know that it is a never-ending task, impossible to keep completely up to date. Fuller is to be complimented on his comprehensiveness and detail.

There are descriptions of some 75 species that have become extinct since 1600. Nearly all have colour illustrations, with a wide range of sources, including splendid examples of the work of artists such as Lear, Wolf and Keulemans.

John A. Burton, *Natural History and Wildlife Conservation Writer and Consultant.*



Kagu *Rhynochetos jubatus* from the book *Extinct Birds*.

128



Ivory-billed woodpeckers *Campephilus principalis* from the book *Extinct Birds*. This species will probably be extinct by the end of the century.

The Animal Smugglers

John Nichol

Christopher Helm Ltd, Kent, 1987, 208 pp., HB £14.95

There is an important debate among conservationists about trade in wildlife. Some say it should be stopped because making animals worth money literally 'puts a price on their head' and poses a threat to their survival. Others, including the author of this book, argue that animals must be seen to be worth money or poor people have no incentive to help conserve them. This is particularly true in Third World countries where most wildlife trade begins, but where income now is a more pressing problem than long-term conservation issues.

As a film maker and one-time animal trader himself, John Nichol offers a uniquely authoritative personal view of wildlife trade. His book is written in a chatty colloquial style and recounts many tales of animal trading—sometimes amusing, sometimes nasty, always interesting and thought provoking. The book is not an exposé, a condemnation, or an apology. Stories are told, facts are revealed and left to speak for themselves. As an insider, personally known to many key

Oryx Vol 22 No 2, April 1988