

drastically, but little is known of its present status and no information is provided as to the interaction, if any, between the native mink and feral American mink.

A great deal of interesting work is currently being published on the mammals of Europe but the task of synthesising it is complicated by the multiplicity of nations and languages. This compilation, being competent, well balanced and up to date, will therefore be relevant and welcome beyond the confines of France.

G. B. CORBET

Charles Waterton's Wanderings in South America, edited by Gilbert Phelps. Charles Knight, £4.

Waterton was a splendid eccentric—perhaps the French *un original* describes him better. He made his Yorkshire estate into a 19th century precursor of Minsmere. He experimented with the poison *curare*. He rode on the back of an alligator he wanted to capture uninjured. During the Napoleonic era and the Spanish–American Wars of Liberation he spent years in the wild country between the Orinoco and the Amazon, always with a keen eye and an insatiable curiosity for every aspect of nature. The oddities of his style will not appeal to everyone, particularly his tiresome discourses to the ‘kind and gentle reader’ and his addiction to Latin tags, while his stubborn refusal to use scientific names is only redeemed by the glossary compiled by David Snow.

Waterton's contributions to taxidermy and his original zoological discoveries were long ago absorbed into the general body of scientific knowledge. What makes his narratives still readable is the personality of the author, endearing and infuriating, that emerges on every page.

G. T. CORLEY SMITH

A Field Guide to the Insects of Britain and Northern Europe, by Michael Chinery. Collins, £2.95.

Studying Insects—a practical guide, by R. L. E. Ford. Warne, £2.50.

This field guide attempts the daunting task of helping the beginner to learn something about insects, their structure, their classification and their life histories. It includes workable keys to the insect groups, and the confirmed lepidopterist will discover almost for the first time what structural features are used to separate the major groups of moths and butterflies. There are 60 colour plates and many line drawings, a ten-page glossary and five pages of selected bibliography listing books which take the matter further. For its price it is very good value, and schools and university students as well as amateur naturalists who collect will find it extremely helpful to have illustrated keys to insect orders and families and good enlarged colour pictures of so many common British insects. The end papers have colour pictures with reference numbers to the plates where other related insects can be found. Whether ‘Northern Europe’ correctly indicates the habitat of the foreign insects illustrated is more open to doubt—many of them seem to be Mediterranean, but this is not a disadvantage. The book has been prepared with very great care, has very few (mostly trivial) typographical errors, and should be very attractive to a wide public.

The second book claims to be a fully revised edition of ‘Practical Entomology’ (1963) but many mistakes remain unchanged. It is a chatty