

Book Reviews

The Face of the Tiger, by Charles McDougal. Rivington & Deutsch, £6.50.

Until 1969, when George Schaller's classic *The Deer and the Tiger* was published, books about tigers were anecdotal and chiefly concerned with hunting. With the launching of the World Wildlife Fund's campaign to save the species from threatened extinction, three other tiger books appeared in quick succession, by K. Sankhala, Arjan Singh and the writer of this review. Interest in tigers was by then widespread. Charles McDougal has now written an excellent account of one of the intensive studies which arose from the conservation effort. Schaller's work was based on detailed studies of the tiger and its prey species in the Kanha Reserve in India during 1964/5. McDougal, as Director and Chief Naturalist of the Tiger Tops lodge in the Chitawan National Park in Nepal, has based his book on a five-year study in a locality where the Tiger Ecology Project of the Smithsonian Institution has been operating for some years. Wisely, he did not begin where Schaller left off, but first painstakingly repeated the latter's work on population dynamics and territorial and breeding behaviour. The result is an admirable comparison between behaviour patterns in the relatively dry open forest of Kanha and in the dense moist forest of the Nepalese terai. His observations concerning social grouping and dominance hierarchy are particularly interesting. Whether the constant use of live tethered baits and the disturbance caused by the Smithsonian telemetry project resulted in entirely normal behaviour among Chitawan's thirty tigers is perhaps debatable, though both devices undoubtedly facilitated McDougal's studies. The fitting of radio collars has enabled diurnal movements to be plotted accurately for the first time, but could not be used at night when tigers are most active. These shortcomings do not, however, detract from a fascinating and well-illustrated book.

GUY MOUNTFORT

World Guide to Mammals, by Nicole Duplaix and Noel Simon. Octopus, £5.95.
Inside the Animal World, by Maurice and Robert Burton. Macmillan, £6.95.

Of all the recent popular books on the world's mammals this *World Guide* can probably be recommended as the best yet, both in illustrations and text. Many of the large mammals, e.g., the gelada baboon, great apes, big cats and some antelopes, get a page to themselves. As an indication of coverage in the middle-size range, three out of thirteen gazelle species are illustrated and seven out of twelve macaques. The cetaceans get the scantiest treatment among the large mammals with only six pages for the entire group, and the small mammal coverage is erratic: gerbils, for example, with a hundred species, get only one illustration and eight lines; the peculiar naked mole-rat is illustrated but not mentioned, and the distinctive marsupial mole, usually accorded a family to itself, is missing.

The 275 colour illustrations by Peter Barrett set a high standard, both aesthetically and for accuracy. (One is wrongly captioned—the 'Greenland right whale' on p. 136 is in fact a black right whale.) Distribution maps show world distribution of whole groups or more often individual species, but contain a number of errors. Some of the more glaring have been corrected in the British edition, but appear in the review copy, which is the American edition, but others remain—the map on p. 168 is uncaptioned and presumably intended to represent some combination of marten species.

In short, a useful and beautifully produced book that could have benefitted by more careful attention to detail.

The Burtons' book is a concise and authoritative review of animal behaviour for the layman. The thirteen chapters are divided by subject—'eating and drinking', 'holding a territory' etc, each providing examples from a wide range of animal groups including the invertebrates, although the emphasis is on birds and mammals. There are excellent line drawings by Hilary Burn and thirty-two plates of colour photographs.

The diversity of animal form and behaviour is so overwhelming that it is perhaps

inevitable that one is in the end left with a stronger impression of the bizarre and intriguing examples rather than any penetrating understanding of the fundamentals. The complete lack of documentation here is at times frustrating—so much of animal behaviour is, by its very nature, ephemeral and elusive, and observations are difficult to repeat sufficiently to become the basis of a sound generalisation. It is claimed, for example (p. 114) that it is 'a fundamental principal in zoology that predators do not hunt in the vicinity of their core area'. Without evidence that this is so, or any explanation of why it should be so, such a statement must join the many in a limbo between fact and speculation that makes behaviour such a difficult subject to penetrate.

G. B. CORBET

Mammals of Thailand, by **Boonsong Lekagul** and **Jeffrey A. McNeely**. Association for the Conservation of Wildlife, 4 Old Custom House Lane, Bangkok 5, US \$49.

To increase your knowledge of Asian mammals, you can do no better than to invest in this splendid book. In 800-plus pages (weighing 3kg) of facts, figures and illustrations it covers 264 mammal species, most of which, despite the title, range far beyond the boundaries of Thailand. The book is of interest and value to anyone interested in the fauna of the Oriental Region.

To those familiar with conservation in SE Asia it will be no surprise to learn that it is the brainchild of Dr Boonsong Lekagul, the distinguished naturalist who has done much to protect and popularise the fauna of Thailand and neighbouring countries; it is surely only a matter of time before his conservation efforts are recognised with a major international award. He and Jeff McNeely have produced a reference work that is not only impressive in its scope but also very readable. After an introduction covering the geological past of Thailand, habitat types, zoogeography and current legislation concerning wildlife, they give a comprehensive introduction to and discussion of all orders and families. Every species is illustrated with either a photograph or drawing, and the text gives detailed information on its taxonomy, distribution (with map), morphology (including dental and cranial characters), and whatever is known about the animal's ecology and behaviour. I am particularly pleased with the section on bats, a group which is often a mystery to the non-specialist and consequently frequently omitted from guides. With its help we are even beginning to make sense of the aerial fauna of Sulawesi!

Fieldworkers and interested amateurs alike will find this book excellent value. It is expensive, but buyers can console themselves with the thought that it is a work of reference that will never be outdated. Jeff McNeely is now hard at work on an even more ambitious (and weightier?) *Mammals of Indonesia* which will certainly prove another 'must' for those fascinated by the wildlife of SE Asia. Better reinforce your bookshelves now!

KATHLEEN MACKINNON

India's Wildlife in 1959–70, by **M. Krishnan**. Bombay Natural History Society, Rs 30.

This volume brings together the author's four reports published in the *Journal* of the Bombay Natural History Society in 1971–2. They were based mainly on his field notes of 12 years, including two final years of intensive ecological survey of wild mammals in peninsular India made possible by a fellowship from the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund. The significance of this 12-year period is that photographic documentation (242 illustrations in this volume, from about 6000 used in the study) was extensively employed as evidence to reinforce observation. Although the author considers that the primary object of the survey was to assess the impact of the changing environment on the wildlife, he gives much original information on the morphology and behaviour of