

Ovis ammon ammon and *Ovis ammon hodgsoni*, run up to 48 inches—there is even one recorded shoulder height measurement of the former of no less than 53 inches, about 10 inches higher than a wild stag in Scotland. Although both these sheep are larger than the Marco Polo sheep *Ovis ammon poli*, the latter holds the world's record for horn length, with a distance of 75 inches over the curl and a tip to tip spread of 54½ inches.

This book is intended not only for the scientist but also for the sportsman, and to cater for the latter, the author has quoted freely from sporting literature describing the pursuit of the various sheep of the world. Some of these accounts, such as that by Carruthers in *Beyond the Caspian*, describing how he shot his fine *Ovis ammon ammon*, make good and exciting reading, but others, such as the somewhat bloodthirsty exploits of Theodore Roosevelt junior after his *Ovis ammon karelini*, or the irresponsible shooting of L. S. Chadwick after stone sheep, when he continued shooting at a ram which he could “no longer see with the naked eye”, would be better forgotten than repeated.

This is a useful book of reference on an animal which, for the most part, frequents those parts of the world about which little information has yet reached the western world.

G. KENNETH WHITEHEAD.

Life Histories of North American Thrushes, Kinglets and their Allies, by Arthur Cleveland Bent. Constable, 22s.

Life History of North American Nuthatches, Wrens, Thrashers and their Allies, by Arthur Cleveland Bent. Constable, 22s.

It would be impertinent to attempt to review these unaltered reprints of two volumes in a well tried series, which were universally acclaimed when they were first published 17 years ago. They are standard works, and any British ornithologist who does not already possess them will be delighted at this opportunity to fill a serious gap in his library. Since the series includes also European species vagrant in America, this also gives the opportunity of acquiring some of the late Bernard Tucker's best work, his summaries for Bent of the redwing, fieldfare, blackbird, wheatear and bluethroat. Other birds closely related to European birds and included here are the American brown creeper and the various races of winter wren, conspecific with the common treecreeper and wren of Britain.

RICHARD FITTER.

Birds of Prey in the World, by Mary Louise Grossman, John Hamlet and Shelly Grossman. Cassell, £6 6s.

Lavishly illustrated and handsomely produced this book sets out to be a definitive work on the world's birds of prey, including all Falconiformes and Owls. The first half covers general biology, and includes chapters on prehistory, legends and myths, including a history of falconry, ecology and habits, adaptations for survival, and conservation. One may wonder if it was really necessary to include so much detail about evolution, legends and myths; space could have been saved here to give a fuller account of ecology and habits, about which there is much good information but one has to dig for it, and it is not systematically presented. The authors are inclined to accept too facile explanations of e.g. territorial behaviour, and in attempting to present the detail in a “popular” manner the whole becomes confused and scrappy. The chapter on conservation is up to date, but it could have been longer with advantage, and have reached some more definite conclusions and recommendations. The second half of the book is an Atlas and Field Guide. But the information is not sufficiently com-

pressed for the former, and as the book weighs seven pounds it is obviously far too bulky for the latter. The information is grouped under genera, which may be satisfactory for monotypic or small genera (which get a disproportionate amount of space) but which make it necessary, in a large genus like *Accipiter* and *Falco*, to wade through many pages to extract little bits of information on a particular species; also there is much to criticise in the drawings that adorn this section.

The outstanding feature of the book is the magnificent series of action photographs by Shelly Grossman. Admittedly most of these are of captive birds, and where photographs of wild birds occur they are often undistinguished unless by other photographers such as Eric Hosking. But only by the use of trained captive birds could one hope to obtain some of these action sequences, for instance those of the horned owl and a snake, and a red-tailed hawk and opossum, and they have been intelligently selected to show features of the basic biology, for instance the use of the cutting tool on the mandible in *Falco*.

Quite evidently this book represents an enormous amount of work, and it will contain enough material on raptors to satisfy many people and perhaps stimulate others. But it seems a pity that the authors did not concentrate on the photographic material with enlarged sections on habits especially as revealed by captive birds, without attempting to do the impossible and include information on all species. This certainly cannot be done without much greater compression and terseness than is found here.

L. H. BROWN.

The Birds of Natal and Zululand, by P. A. Clancey. Oliver & Boyd, 84s.

This book is a noteworthy achievement. It will be indispensable to the student of ornithology, and welcomed by all interested in South African birds. It reflects the greatest credit on the energy of the author, also on the printers. Detailed plumage descriptions are followed by field notes, with reference to nests and breeding seasons, but no account of the eggs. Subspecies are treated on a specific basis and the impression is that attention has been less to field data than to taxonomic considerations. The bird illustrations are all the author's work and in the main are colourful and pleasing, but it is a pity that more species did not receive colour treatment instead of grouping individuals in one species.

Natal's extensive grasslands are divided into types according to altitude, and are distinctive in the avifaunal populations. The excellent photographs of the countryside include three of the "highveld sourveld" but regrettably none of the midland "nkonkoni" grassveld. The country descends rapidly from 10,000 feet to sea-level and its zoogeography is of great interest; so it is unfortunate that the map, instead of being topographical is reproduced from a tourist road guide. There are some distributional omissions, for the author has not yet investigated certain areas, as shown by the addenda which result largely from a recent paper on a part of the Drakensberg foothills, and there will be some disagreement with certain subspecific divisions. Small imperfections, however, do not alter a very readable and most competent volume, which is a valuable contribution to the biological literature of an interesting region.

J. VINCENT.

About Sharks and Shark Attack, by David H. Davies. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 40s.

The picture of 'the triangular fin of a shark cutting through the water' is a stock element of many thrillers; in popular imagination the savagery of the shark is unequalled, but the true facts about sharks' attacks on man are less well known. In this book Dr. Davies describes in detail—