

The frontispiece shows elephants, lions and buffalos in tree savanna country, and the eleven other colour plates illustrate virtually every species dealt with in the text, most of them very well, though the figure of the blue duiker *Cephalophus monticola*, is poor, and one of the lechwe is a composite animal with the colour of the black lechwe *smithemani* but the great spreading horns of the Kafue lechwe *kafuensis*. The colobus monkey illustrated is *C. abyssinicus* not *angolensis*. Nevertheless the general standard of the illustrations is high and the colour reproduction good. They are a most attractive feature of a book which is excellent value, informative, concise and attractively produced.

W. F. H. ANSELL

**Grey Seal, Common Seal**, by **R. M. Lockley**. Deutsch, 27s. 6d. There is a mass of information on every aspect of seal life in this "Survival" book published in association with Anglia Television's Natural History Unit; and it makes delightful reading. The author has made extensive observation on seals in the wild and gives some fascinating descriptions of their life and behaviour. A chapter on "The Breeding Season" gives a detailed picture of the grey seal's courtship and mating habits, with plans of two sites, showing the dispersion of the animals over them, a great help in visualising the scene.

Mr. Lockley has also brought up orphan seals, and shows that the curious difference in the temperaments of grey and common seal exists from an early age and is not modified by being reared by humans. Anyone who has watched seals knows that the common seal is livelier than the grey seal, and seems to be more affectionate, or at least less quarrelsome, in its relationship with its companions. Mr. Lockley's orphans showed the same behaviour. Diana, the common seal, always wished to be with her humans, even coming out of the sea when they did; Sabrina, the grey seal, never showed any liking for her guardians. Mr. Lockley points out that "a grey seal pup, in nature, is hostile to all other animals except its mother, and that such hostility is valuable in securing living space in the nursery for the more dominant pups best fitted to carry on the species."

As well as the invaluable results of Mr. Lockley's own observations, one of the most surprising of which is that totally blind seals can live and thrive, the book contains the results of a great deal of work by others on a number of topics: on the depths to which seals can dive, on population studies and on the physiology of seals. Mr. Lockley loves seals and after reading this book, even those who have never seen them will understand why.

DIANA SPEARMAN

**No Room for Bears**, by **Frank Dufresne**. Allen & Unwin, 32s. Anyone truly fond of animals, whether watching them in the field or reading about them in an armchair, should have this book by purchase or prescription as a gift. This is quite sweeping praise given conscientiously. Frank Dufresne wrote many books about the North but I think this is his best; he knew his animals intimately and he wrote so easily. This book is as full of human and ursine anecdote as many of his others but it holds together as a valuable commentary on the behaviour of the big bears of Alaska and on their several habitats surviving in a hungry new State where natural resources are looked at covetously as ready cash. One is sorry, for example, to hear of the destruction going on at Admiralty Island

where the old Sitka spruce can be felled and got to a ship headed for Japan in double-quick time. The island streams have become drains for the muck. Bears are naturally growing fewer though a moderate trophy-hunting of bears on Admiralty Island in the past has been no incon-siderable help to the economy of south-east Alaska.

We were brought up to think of grizzly bears, brown bears, tundra bears, and so on. Now we know that they are all one species inclined to racial and environmental differences. Bears living on salmon on the Alaskan Peninsula look different and behave differently from the grizzlies of the Brooks Range, but it does seem they are all brown bears. Bears are not animals with which to trifle, but this does not mean they are a constant danger to the wandering naturalist in Alaska. Rather are they a constant exercise to our intelligence as observers of animal behaviour. I admit to having been extremely circumspect pushing my way through alder thickets in which there is fresh bear sign because bears do not like sudden disturbance. You can watch them and relax at close quarters if they are fishing for salmon in the rapids of some river, for you are removed from their orbit. A bear disturbed when he is eating meat—possibly your own cache—is very dangerous. Just give him best. Few animals can give you more interesting or amusing watching than these big bears. Frank Dufresne conveys it all so well.

Rachel Horne's drawings in this book are a delight. She too must have watched the animals.

F. FRASER DARLING

### **Mice All Over, by Peter Crowcroft. Foulis, 25s.**

As Dr. Crowcroft remarks in his opening chapter, 'Most popular books about animals are not about animals at all. They are about people.' The distinguishing thing about his book is that, for once, the animal comes first, even if it is only the humble house mouse. Books reporting serious researches about animals and written in a style that everybody can understand, are few. All the more, therefore, should this one be welcomed because it does that rare thing—tells a simple tale about animals and at the same time gives a report of solid and well-designed research.

Mankind has been troubled for centuries by the house mouse which has spread throughout the world from its original home on the Asiatic steppes. Since it is a specialist in exploiting seed crops, it is not surprising that it has followed agricultural man's footsteps. Serious scientific attention was not paid to its commensal activities until the Second World War when stores of grain, whether in the rick or in sacks under the roof of a Ministry of Food 'buffer depot,' became so precious that the tithe taken by the house mouse was regarded as intolerable.

Researches into the natural history and population of this enterprising pilferer showed that the main problem in reducing their numbers was to arrive at an understanding of their home ranges and social organisations. Some time after the war, but while food stocks were still zealously guarded, Dr. Crowcroft was charged, as a member of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, with gaining basic ecological information about house mice which would render their control feasible. His adventures, physical and intellectual, are told in this book.

Prospective readers should not be misled by the popular title nor by the generally light-hearted style of writing. The tale is told well, in direct and trenchant language, but it is also a good tale scientifically and traces