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East Africa, that elephants are still dying from overcrowding in Tsavo, and that licensed sport hunting controlled game populations in Kenya. The authors' attitude to tourism is ambivalent. They approve of its foreign exchange earnings but are gratuitously disparaging of tourists, for example why is the group pictured in Fig. 3.4 on rather ordinary-looking chairs said to be 'viewing wildlife in middle-class comfort'? Don't the plebs ever sit down, even on holiday?

There is indeed a need for a reconciliation between the conflicting demands of man and wildlife, but it will need a less prejudiced and more thoughtful approach than is found in this book to achieve it.

S. K. Eltringham, Department of Applied Biology, University of Cambridge, UK.

The Grizzly Bear

Thomas McNamee

Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1985, 308 pp, \$14.50

We humans tend to be most intrigued with those of our fellow species on earth that still have the audacity to kill and perhaps eat some of us occasionally. Our fascination is out of all proportion to the number of occasions upon which this actually occurs these days, and to the biological importance of the predation (except perhaps to those eaten) since there are so many of us and so few left of them. Here in North America, if we resist the temptation to troll our bodies for great whites off our coasts, we really serve as prey for only one beast with any degree of regularity—the grizzly bear, the hero–villain of this book.

Life with *Ursus arctos* has always been difficult, and humans and bears have been coexisting uneasily, first in Eurasia, then in North America via the Bering land bridge, from the Pleistocene ice ages up until 1985. This most recent of several books written about grizzlies, and the first book by Yale graduate Thomas McNamee, is as much about this mingled love–hate–fear relationship as about the grizzly itself. It is a fascinating story of grizzly bear biology, but it is also a sociological study of the people who, in a variety of ways, voluntarily or unavoidably, are linked with the grizzly bear. It is this comprehensive view, and McNamee's skilful presentation of the issues, that

make this book the best single, non-technical treatment of this complex, idiosyncratic, and powerful animal to date.

The many facets of grizzly ecology and the problems a bear faces are elucidated through the technique of following a fictional, but typical (if there is such a thing) family of grizzlies in the Yellowstone Park area of Wyoming from their emergence from hibernation in the spring to the survivor's return the following autumn. Interwoven into the tale are digressions into the distribution, physiology, evolution, taxonomy (i.e. scientific classification of the various forms of the grizzly–brown bear lineage), and many other scientific issues concerning the bear. The overall result is that you learn an awful lot about grizzlies in a palatable and easily absorbed manner. One thing that emerges is that the grizzly is a difficult creature to manage effectively, and there are a multitude of reasons for this, mainly based on the complexity of its ecological requirements, its low reproductive rate, its need for large amounts of virgin wilderness habitat, and its capacity for generating hatred and fear in many humans inhabiting grizzly country.

The book is excellent in its use of the grizzly to illustrate some of the major problems and controversies confronting those people and organizations in charge of maintaining our wildlife and its habitat such as the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, and the various state game agencies that govern grizzly populations. Plagued by classic confrontations between researchers and managers (exemplified by the well-publicized disagreement over grizzly use of dumps in national parks between the Craighead brothers and Yellowstone Park officials), by personal animosities, by conflicting interests, even within the same organization, and by the need to make decisions based upon data, which are by their nature almost always inadequate, it is easy to see why theory and practice in grizzly conservation are often decidedly different and always controversial.

Of primary importance in the book is its illustration of the dire straits in which the grizzly finds itself today. The threats are many, ranging from poaching and legal hunting, to habitat destruction from timber-cutting, mining, construction and

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industrialization to name a few. Through analysis of the population dynamics of the grizzly, McNamee explains why the death of even one bear, especially of a female, is so critical to the survival of the remaining populations. Also, eloquently, McNamee lets us know why we should care about and strive to conserve an animal that can and does occasionally harm some of us.

It is a knowledgeable treatment of a fascinating subject, and I recommend it to anyone interested in grizzly bears, wildlife research and management, or the formulation of wildlife conservation strategy.

Don Moll, Associate Professor of Biology at Southwest Missouri State University

Among Predators and Prey

Hugo van Lawick

Elm Tree Books, London, 1986, 224 pp, £25

What a curious mixture is this book. There is a host of spectacular photographs, all of them in colour, and some of them in sumptuous colour. Several dozen of the photographs are outstanding, and at least 20 rank with the best ever. Van Lawick's forte is his eye for unusual action, and his kill sequences are remarkable. Another of Van Lawick's strong suits is his use of landscapes. Here we see African animals portrayed in their African environments, rather than zoo-type portraits presented in close-up isolation. Yet a further special skill of the author lies with his splendid, often superb, use of light: his back-lit shots are in a class of their own.

I write all this after living for 24 years in savannah Africa, and spending six of them as a professional photographer. It is against this background that I say this expensive book is worth every penny.

Of course one should not expect that every single shot is to be a show-stopper. A good number of them are too static, or even 'flat'. Some others are little better than interesting. When there are so many books available on African wildlife, certain of them being publications of superlative quality, it seems odd that this eminent photographer should include so many 'passenger' photographs. But it is worth saying again: his best efforts are way ahead of the field.

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And yet, and yet. The book comes across as a trifle pretentious. There are plenty of shots of predators, and plenty of prey creatures. But only a few present predator-prey interactions. So why the book's title? The text purports to be somewhat scientific, yet the analyses and interpretations are often naive to say the least. Elephants plucking at tree foliage are described as 'grazing'. Even some scientists' names are mis-spelled. Perhaps worst of all, the conservation conclusions and recommendations are often unwarranted, given the exigencies of economic and political factors in developing Africa.

These shortcomings apart, this is a book of exceptional value. Whenever I want to indulge my sense of nostalgia for African savannahs, whether with their heat and glare of midday or their soft subtleties of twilight, I shall return to this volume, which I am sure will work its trick on me for years to come.

Norman Myers, Consultant in Environment and Development, Oxford, UK

The Rare Plants and Flowers of Western Sichuan

Chief Editor: Jian Tangjun

Institute of Biology, Academia Sinica, Box 416, Chengdu, Sichuan, People's Republic of China, 1984, 108 pp., 17 yuan (= about £3.50)

The province of Sichuan (spelt, until recently, Szechwan) is one of 26 Chinese provinces and lies in the south-west of China next-door to its equally botanically famous neighbour, the province of Yunnan.

This limp-back, 108-page volume is dominated by 115 colour photographs. The first 26 depict different botanical habitats from lowland forest to high-altitude grasslands (and include a shot of bamboo being eaten by the inescapable giant panda). The next 89 photographs depict plant species, from large and ancient trees to tiny—and no doubt annual—flowers. A large ginko tree *Ginkgo biloba* standing 30 metres tall and measuring 12.4 metres in girth is believed to be over 1700 years old. Evergreen trees endemic to China include *Picea purpurea*, *Abies georgei* and *Cunninghamia unicanaliculata*, the latter being also endemic to Sichuan as is the deciduous tree