

British or foreign. There are no restrictions on the importation of specimens and none on buying and selling even the rarest species. It might be difficult to discover the volume of trade in Britain, but if such information became available, it would then be possible to consider restrictions. The countries from which many of the butterflies come cannot be expected to do anything—they are often too concerned with other more pressing matters to worry about butterflies—but if the demand were to cease there would no longer be a market for field collectors to sell their specimens. It does seem that unless action is taken quickly we shall be in the same embarrassing position with butterflies as we are, for example, with the large mammals of Africa: their numbers were reduced by needless slaughter, and now we Europeans are trying with understandably limited success to persuade the people and governments of the independent African nations that they have a world heritage which must be conserved at all costs. If on occasion our pleas for conservation fall upon deaf ears we have only ourselves to blame.

Butterflies of the World, by H. L. Lewis. Harrap, £10.

This exceptionally well-produced book shows about 5000 species of butterflies in full colour arranged by the major biogeographical regions of the world. It provides at a glance a view of the world's butterfly fauna; you can see, for example, that the butterflies of Africa and tropical Asia are similar, that those of South America are distinct from all others, and that many European species have North American counterparts. You can see also that butterflies are essentially tropical and that western Europe is rather poor in species. The photographs are of specimens in the British Museum's magnificent collection, built up chiefly by amateurs; indeed looking through the book is rather like a visit to a museum.

That is the trouble. For the illustrations are likely to bring out the collector's instinct in even the most ardent conservationist. Butterflies are beautiful creatures, and so many colourful photographs of pinned specimens set in an unnatural position create a desire to collect. Would it not have been possible to have assembled at least a selection of photographs of living butterflies in their natural surroundings? This would remind us that butterflies are living animals and not something akin to postage stamps.

Nevertheless the author has given us a splendid feast of about half the world species, and the book is a *delight to thumb through, pausing over this or that continent and its butterflies*. The text is brief and rather superficial and, apart from a note or two about distribution, could easily have been omitted.

D. F. OWEN

Key to North American Waterfowl, by Stephen R. Wylie and Stewart S. Furlong (Livingstone, Wynnewood, Pa, \$3.95), is a booklet in the new waterproof and washable plastic material that can be taken into the field and dropped in water without coming to any harm. It is not a key in the ordinary sense. It consists entirely of an ordinal series of colour pictures of ducks, geese and swans, with no descriptions, but details of flight patterns and food and habitat preferences. It will nonetheless be useful to North American wildfowlers.