

Wild Sanctuaries by Robert Murphy. Dutton, \$22.50.

The shrinkage of the wilderness leads to a desire to conserve wildlife. This means the creation of reserves, initially thought of as sanctuaries where nature holds full sway and man enters only as a passive observer. The longer one lives with this idea, however, the more one realises its faults. Sanctuaries are usually tiny oases of wilderness; gradually the effects of 'civilisation' penetrate the boundaries, the very isolation of the sanctuary in time causes changes in its character, and ultimately the conservation value of the wilderness within is much reduced.

Robert Murphy gives a graphic account of this process in the establishment and management of the 300 and more national wildlife refuges of the United States, administered by the Department of the Interior; they cater for the concourses of migratory birds on the four main flyways from the Arctic to the Gulf of Mexico, for small populations of buffalo, Sonoran pronghorn antelope, muskox, alligators, whooping cranes and many other threatened species – in fact a good representative sample of what remains of the primitive wilderness habitats.

Wild Sanctuaries is a handsome book written by a man who is full of the romance of wild America. His sense of history, exploratory urge and ability to communicate his ideas, combine to make it a wholesome essay in wildlife conservation. He does not claim to be a scientist yet the book contains a welter of scientific information in digestible form and is one of the best illustrated records so far of these refuges, 250 photographs and 32 maps. To some his coverage would undoubtedly be patchy, but he has marshalled the facts well for the refuges he visited and provides a summary of the 170 most important ones.

The US national parks are world-famous; but who knows about the national wildlife refuges? This book shows the needs of wildlife and man in balance: wildfowling, fishing, hunting, sailing, camping and other pursuits are seen in the background of wildlife management. In the foreword Stewart Udall strikes the key note: 'We need sanctuaries just as the animals need refuges'. Robert Murphy has sustained the theme with a fine portrait of American wildlife – diverse and beautiful – within the attractive frame of the refuges.

J. MORTON BOYD

The Zoology of Tropical Africa by J. L. Cloudsley-Thompson. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 84s.

Professor Cloudsley-Thompson must be one of the most prolific authors amongst contemporary professional zoologists. In recent years he has produced a series of books which all transmit to the reader something of his immense enthusiasm for his subject. This one tackles the formidable task of summarising the salient features of the African ecology. He begins with a general survey of the ecological diversity, first outlining the main features of the continent's physical and natural attributes and then describing in more detail the organisms comprising the major habitats from rain forest to coral reefs. After this he considers animal numbers and the factors that may control them; migration, and the effect of physical factors on their breeding rhythms and other day-to-day activities. The last part deals with aspects of environmental physiology and the ecology of man.

It is important that, at the present time when the world is becoming increasingly aware of the interest and value of large mammals, we should realise that their preservation is entirely dependent on our understanding of the ecology of the areas in which they occur. Wildlife is an obvious feature of the African scene, but the animals themselves are merely a small part of a huge system in which the climate, man and even microscopic soil organisms all play a vital role, and it is

in spreading these ideas that this book should play an important part. The management of large tracts of sparsely populated land in Africa can only be based on a sound knowledge of their ecology.

It is regrettable that a well produced, expensive and otherwise important book should be marred by a large number of serious typographical errors, poor black-and-white figures and indifferent plates.

M. J. COE

The Kruger Park and other National Parks by **R. J. Labuschagne**.
Da Gama, Johannesburg.

Wankie, the Story of a Great Game Reserve by **Ted Davison**.
Books of Africa (Pty) Limited, Cape Town, 37s. 6d. (R3·75).

Game Ranger on Horseback by **Nick Steele**. Books of Africa,
Cape Town, 30s. (R3).

Life with Daktri, Two Vets in East Africa by **Susanne Hart**.
Bles/Collins, 36s.

Four books about nature conservation in Africa, each distinctive and highly recommended, all in one way or another intimately connected with man's approach to a complex subject, the first three related generally to a specified region, the fourth mainly concerned with the well-being of individual wild animals. Each of the trio has a useful map of the national parks and/or game reserves in the countries or area under discussion – South Africa, Rhodesia and Natal – and all three are well illustrated, the Kruger one exceptionally so with superb colour pictures by ten of South Africa's leading game photographers. This book celebrates the 70th birthday of Africa's first and best known wild animal sanctuary, now embracing some 10,000 square miles. The park's development and achievements are meticulously recorded with descriptions of its inmates, and there is adequate reference to South Africa's other national parks.

Wankie, in Rhodesia, another great game reserve covering some 5000 square miles, but only 41 years old, will ever be associated with Ted Davison, its founder, who was originally given £500 (including his own salary) for his first year's budget. Won from a bushy stretch of waste Kalahari sand in the face of well-nigh insuperable difficulties, it became a wonderful sanctuary stocked with an abundance of wild animals in astonishing variety. Ted Davison, now retired, here publishes valuable observations, such as the record of weights and measurements of new-born elephant twins and the growth rate of a crocodile over a 31 years' period.

Nick Steele deals with the trials and tribulations of a game ranger in Natal in the course of his everyday duties, during 12 years' service, when persistent skilful poaching by the local inhabitants was an ever-present hazard both to the wildlife and himself; the hideous cruelty of the untended wire snare makes sickening reading. This Zululand story introduces that strange, prehistoric-looking creature, the white or square-lipped rhinoceros, which, reduced to a mere few dozen and seemingly destined for early extinction, recovered sensationally to a total of about 800, some 500 of which have been removed to restock localities from which it had long disappeared.

Common to all these sanctuaries are the climatic extremes of devastating droughts and terrible floods, terrifying bush-fires, the urgent necessity to conserve and develop water resources, the importance of soil conservation, the perils of disease and the development of communications, as well as the provision of amenities for the visitor. Their achievement, like the magician's, savours of having produced something from nothing.