

proved a groundless anxiety—the animals merely jump over the obstacle.

This is an absorbing book not only for the great deal that it has to say about migrations, fur, feathers, the temperature of sleeping men and the use of clothing, but also because the author appears to be musing on paper. It is intriguing and delightful to find such candour as in his remark about the cooling of titmice at low temperatures: 'But I would not know how to examine a physical system in which all three factors in the equation comprising temperature, heat and insulation were changing'.

JOE LUCAS

**The Long African Day, by Norman Myers.** Collier-Macmillan, £5.95.

The prospective purchaser would be misled, if he thought this was yet another 'coffee table' production on that continent. The pictures indicate the quality of the camera work, but there the comparison with other lavishly illustrated books, many of which become skeletons if the photographer's art is removed, must end. Take away the excellent photographs from this work and only the skin has been removed, exposing muscle and fat of considerable import.

Norman Myers lives in Kenya and is much travelled throughout East Africa, where he has among other things undertaken ecological surveys for IUCN on the status of the leopard and cheetah, as *Oryx* readers know. His own experience, coupled with an intimate knowledge of the work carried out by other scientists in East and Central Africa, has resulted in an excellent compendium of the wildlife scene. Full recognition is given of the work and observations of many researchers and the bibliography shows the wealth of scientific experience that he has drawn upon. Every major 'problem' from poaching to elephant overpopulation is dealt with sincerely and with great objectivity.

In the final pages the author says, 'This book is not a polite plea for wildlife. There have been dozens of those in the last ten years, and if there were scores every year—given the progress that has been achieved so far—they still would not meet a fraction of what is needed. Because there is no other measure: what matters is not whether a lot has been done, or a lot more than a lot, but whether it is *enough*'.

This book should be read by all those who have a feeling for the wildlife of Africa. It will increase their own knowledge whilst providing the answers to the many questions posed by the unconverted.

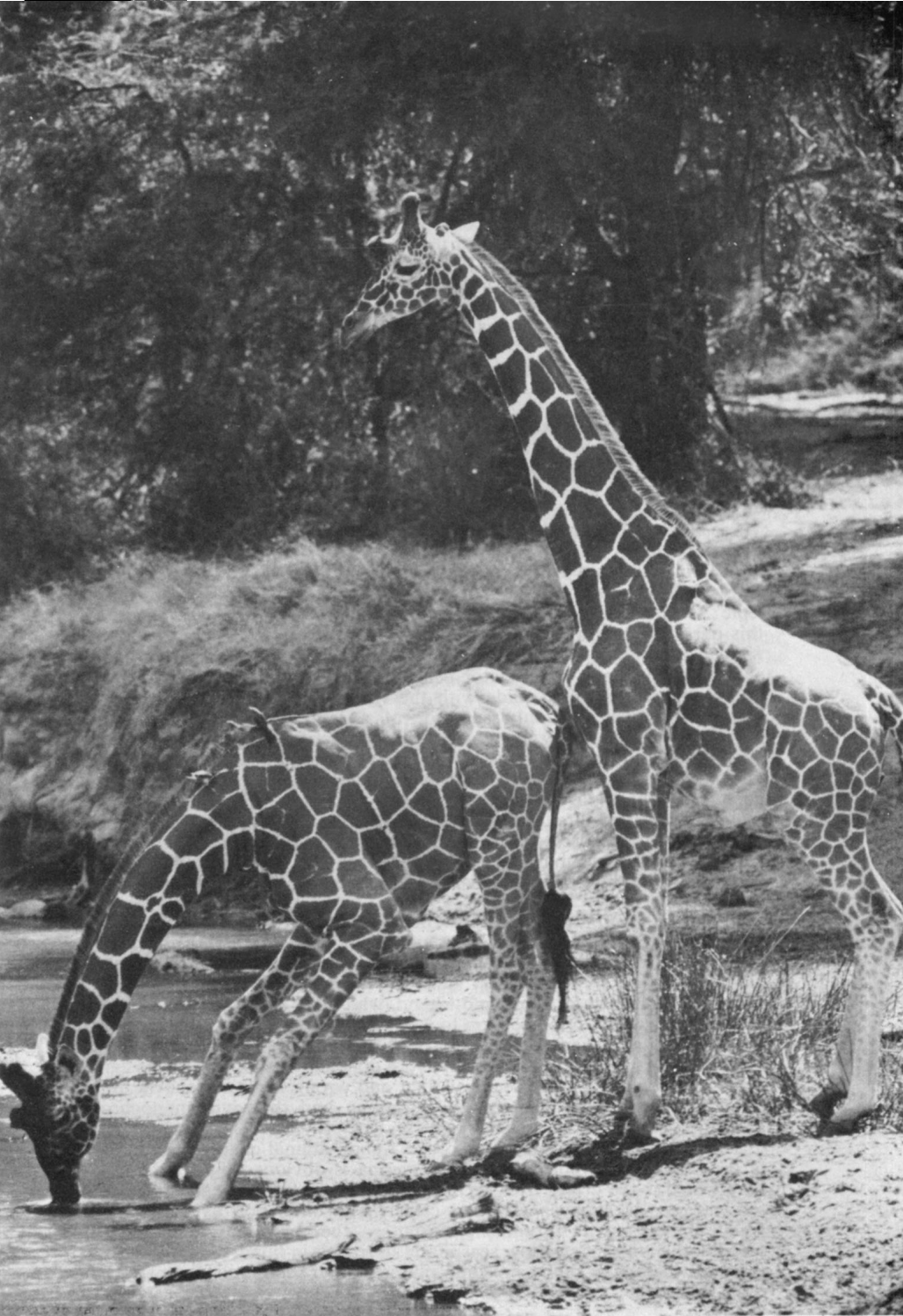
R. J. WHEATER

**Okavango Adventure, by Jeremy Mallinson.** David & Charles, £3.25.

This account of an animal-collecting journey to Africa fulfills the first requirement of any successful book—it is eminently readable. From the time the author leaves Tilbury, with masses of luggage and a pair of European red foxes destined for Pretoria Zoo, until his return to Heathrow, with a varied collection of African specimens, we are interested in his progress, sympathise with him in his failures and rejoice over his successes.

His modesty, revealed in humorous, self-deprecatory accounts of his adventures, gives the book a universal appeal. Not only does his sincere love of animals become apparent, but also his love and understanding of people—a quality sometimes missing from books of this genre. We see this most clearly, perhaps, in his amazing relationship with the lion, Chinky, and in the affectionate rapport between the author and John Carpenter, the African who was trained to build cages and feed animals.

With pace and infectious enthusiasm, Mallinson describes how 'the



**RETICULATED GIRAFFES**, photographed by Norman Myers, author of the book reviewed opposite

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collecting itch' grew, and reinforces his story with pleasing, colourful descriptions of the scenery of the Okavango swamps. His account of the bird life round the Thamalakane river, where he saw kingfishers, pygmy geese, African jacanas, cormorants and fish-eagles, is particularly memorable. The slight jerkiness of style, the occasional clichés and lapses into anacoluthon, and the positioning of photographs, could well be irritating in a book which lacked this one's outstanding merits. The lasting impression is of a charming, likeable man whose integrity and depth of knowledge are indisputable, and whose brief, philosophical dissertations on what conservation really is (particularly effective in his postscript) seem more telling and less pompous than those of many authors who have written on the subject.

PHILIP WAYRE

**Solo**, by Hugo van Lawick. Collins, £2.25.

**Crocodile's Eggs for Supper**, by Rennie Bere. Deutsch, £1.50.

**Africa: World of Wildlife Vol. 2**, by Felix Rodriguez de la Fuente. Orbis, £3.

Three titles, all concerned with Africa, respectively tragic, legendary and encyclopaedic:

*Solo* introduces a wild dog theme, as bizarre as it is tragic, which has enjoyed the privilege of a television programme in colour, well described as 'epic'. Is wild nature, reputedly 'red in tooth and claw', normally as cruel as this narrative portrays? It is a sequel to the relevant chapters in *Innocent Killers*, a thrilling account by Jane van Lawick-Goodall and the present author, her husband, of predator behaviour in Tanzania's Serengeti Plains, where contact was first made with the wild-dog pack in which the aptly named Solo was the only survivor of a large maltreated litter. This harrowing tale, superbly illustrated, vividly describes the day-to-day life, in good and bad times, of a pack led by a dominant insensate bitch who killed off, one by one, the defenceless offspring of one of her companions. The misfortunes of 'Solo', the famished, but big-hearted, runt-survivor of a cruelly persecuted litter, make pathetic reading, though human interference finally not only ensured survival, but also, unexpectedly, successful return to a wild family. One may well ask does a pack's dominant bitch always behave so bloodily, or may this be nature's way of effectively controlling numbers?

In view of the total absence of written records, tribal history in primitive Africa has for centuries been propagated by word of mouth, sedulously memorised from generation to generation. Unfortunately, scant opportunity has been taken by those best qualified to place on permanent record valuable traditional folk-lore and legend, which not only provide an insight into local acuteness of perception towards the wild life, but also demonstrate the morality of salient aspects of tribal life. Rennie Bere, writing of the Acholi of northern Uganda, has therefore done a great service for posterity. He stresses 'whose proper sense of right and wrong is clearly shown in this collection of stories'. The title is intriguing and the vivid monochrome drawings peculiarly expressive.

The relationship between some of the Acholi animal characters and those of the Brer Rabbit fables of North America is obvious. In Africa it is the hare which is the crafty trickster, fooling the lion, leopard and others, with the tortoise, as always, wise and clever. The birds portrayed, large and small, are those with prominent attributes—the ubiquitous, semi-domestic wagtail, the migrant swallow seasonally in transit in hundreds of thousands, the male bishop in gaudy breeding plumage, and the familiar, noisy 'tu-tu'