

wide experience, he had been more critical of the claims made for the equipment. He warns strongly that the capture of animals should only be undertaken by highly trained and experienced personnel, for only in this way can losses be kept down to a generally acceptable level of about one per cent.

A number of references are made to work on birds, together with some discussion on the findings, but there is only bare mention of the work on reptiles and amphibians. For those whose interest is primarily in the management of captive stock, the book leaves a number of gaps, and it is evident that the author has not read some of the more recent work from zoological collections. Some of the practical guidance given for field immobilisation is not wholly applicable to animals in captivity and a section of practical hints specifically for the manager of captive stock would have been a welcome addition, particularly in view of the all-embracing title. Nevertheless, the work is a valuable addition to the published data on wildlife biology.

D. M. JONES

Feather Fashions and Bird Preservation, by Robin W. Doughty. California UP, £5.75.

To Save a Bird in Peril, by David Zimmerman. Coward, McCann and Geoghan, \$9.95.

Two books of great interest: one, the history of the plumage trade and the battle to control it, and the other an account of a modern trend in bird protection, particularly of rare and endangered species, for which David Zimmerman coins the name 'clinical ornithology'. The first is written in a scholarly fashion and the second is racy in style.

Mankind has worn the plumage of birds for a very long time, but what was novel about feather fashions at the beginning of the century was the prolonged and considerable comment on the bird harvest. The abundance of the plumage raised spectres of suffering and extinction, which in turn, excited an interest in birds and a revulsion at the wearing of plumage, and led to the formation of the two largest nature protection organisations in the world – the National Audubon Society of America and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Both fought long and hard against the trade and 'the sacrifice of birds on the altar of vanity'. This historical account of some of the earliest activities to protect birds shows how similar they were to some present struggles. The battle against the plumage trade was repeated in the 1960s against certain agrochemical firms.

There are other parallels between these two books. For instance at the turn of the century it was suggested that when the plumage trade threatened the herons and egrets with extinction the birds should be bred in captivity (which in the past had only been possible with the ostrich). David Zimmerman also sees captive breeding of endangered species as an answer, and describes the many ways in which conservationists, chiefly in America, are using this method. But he fails to distinguish between species that are in peril because they have been unable to adapt to physical changes in the environment and those threatened by man's activities (poisons and other pollutions that could ultimately be controlled), and which, given help, would recover by their own natural resilience.

His accounts of the various programmes are detailed about the methods used, the thinking behind them, and occasionally the disagreements that arise. He believes that no species should be allowed to become extinct, and accepts that man may attempt to change the genetic make-up of the species in order to allow it to adapt to the new environment. But he never questions the philosophy behind all this activity. Should we be tampering with nature to this extent? How much of the conservation resources available are such activities going to use?

PETER CONDER