

## Four Ethiopian Wildlife Booklets

THE Ethiopian Tourist Organisation has published four small booklets on Ethiopian wildlife and its conservation, on the initiative of Ato Habte Selassie Tafessa, the dynamic head of ETO and one of the most go-ahead of government administrators in Addis Ababa. He deserves our gratitude and congratulations.

*The High Semyen: Roof of Africa* by John Hurrell Crook is a 32-page pamphlet, the result of the three or four months spent there in 1965 studying the gelada baboon. He writes also about the other wild animals and plants, and the geology and human inhabitants of this, the loftiest mountain range in Ethiopia, and his text is illustrated by 13 photographs, six line-drawings and a map. Having spent five weeks in Semyen with the author I can support his contention that, "for a tourist who is tough, seeking adventure in surroundings that make even the Grand Canyon seem small, a trek by mule caravan through the area is the experience of a lifetime". Besides geladas there are Semyen foxes, and three endemic birds: thick-billed raven, wattled ibis, and white-collared pigeon; lammergeyers are common. The rarest animal is the walia ibex – "200 animals at best" was Leslie Brown's estimate in an area proposed as a national park.

This rare ibex is the subject of a brief appeal for its conservation in a two-fold leaflet *The Walia Ibex* directed to Ethiopians themselves, and printed in both English and Amharic. The most telling argument is the money one, and the example of neighbouring Kenya, which regards its teeming wild life as wild gold, is convincingly quoted.

The walia ibex has pride of place too in the *Mobil Handbook of Conservation: Ethiopia* by Leslie Brown, who made a trip to Semyen in 1963 to investigate its status. Of the wild ass, he says that probably not more than 300-400 survive in Ethiopia and Somalia, However, the mountain nyala, which, like the walia, Semyen fox and gelada, is confined entirely to Ethiopia, is "still quite common in . . . Bale province and extends southwards into the forested country of Sidamo. They are even rumoured to occur in the forested hills east of Lake Abaya." (The reviewer searched for them on Mount Gughe (13,780 ft) in September, 1966, but found none.) The Ethiopian race of the colobus monkey is easily the most striking and beautiful, and it still thrives in parts of the country despite much hunting for its skins. Four mammal species confined to the Ethiopian-Somali border are also discussed: Speke's and Pelzeln's gazelles, the dibatag, and the beira.

Brown's figure of 280 bird species for Ethiopia is a misprint for 820, as is soon clear from reading Emil K. Urban's *Shell Guide to Ethiopian Birds*, a 46-page pamphlet with space to describe only 132 of the commoner and more conspicuous Ethiopian birds. To the average bird-watcher from the Holarctic the birds of Ethiopia are hopelessly bewildering. However, with the aid of this booklet I was able to identify quite a few of the birds in the Great Rift Valley between Lakes Margherita and Ruspoli.

The four booklets are obtainable from ETO, PO Box 2183, Addis Ababa. *The Shell Guide to Ethiopian Birds* costs E\$1.25; the other three are free of charge.

JEFFERY BOSWALL

The fourth edition of *The Littoral Fauna of the British Isles*, by Dr. N. B. Eales (CUP, 50s.), is slightly revised and with some excellent black and white photographs by Dr. W. J. Rees. It is a standard work for marine biologists and will long continue to be so.