

# Book reviews

definitive *Extinct and Vanishing Birds of the World* should at least be mentioned in the introductory chapter, and there ought to be an index. *Oryx* ought to appear in the list of 'additional readings'. The few reference lists are heavily orientated towards the New World and misspell the name of one of the few British authors mentioned.

There certainly is a need for a readable, comprehensive and well thought out book with this title, but sadly this is not it.

Pat Morris, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, University of London, UK.

## **The Enchanted Canopy: Secrets from the Rainforest Roof**

Andrew W. Mitchell

William Collins Sons & Co Ltd, 1986, 255 pp, HB £14.95

Andrew Mitchell was scientific co-ordinator on *Operation Drake* from 1978 to 1982. This book is a narrative picture of rain forest, inspired from his own personal experiences of using light-weight, portable walkways suspended between forest trees, which were erected during that expedition. Over a period of three years or so portable canopy walkways were constructed in three major rain-forest sites of the world: Aila river in the Darien of Panama, the eastern coast at Buso in Papua New Guinea, and at Morowali in eastern Sulawesi. Arguably they could be considered one of the more interesting achievements of the Drake expedition. This book is perhaps the best popular document to account for the activities of *Operation Drake*, but the more interested reader should refer to Mitchell's earlier book, *Operation Drake—Voyage of Discovery*, 1981, for a more formal treatment.

For me, the most interesting parts are the descriptions of research projects currently in progress around various forest sites around the world. Mitchell gives very accurate and detailed accounts of activities by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Central and South America, the Institute of Evolutionary Science of Montpellier in French Guiana, and individuals such as the film-maker Wolfgang Bayer to mention just three. The photographs from these various projects are simply stunning and the selection of material for the book certainly steps

away from the usual photographic agency picture so frequently adopted in popular works. Worthy publicity for the arboreal naturalists around the world, and I thought the account of Andrew Field's PhD studies in Venezuela a fitting obituary for such a dedicated student of the rain forest.

I suppose deep down I am cynical about the aims and successes of projects organized by Colonel John Blashford-Snell. The publicity surrounding all of his expeditions has done much for the causes of tropical science around the world, but at the same time the amount and quality of the scientific work achieved in the expeditions is relatively small in terms of the amount of money spent on them. This book confirms my prejudices—it is a beautiful account written by an enthusiastic but somewhat amateur naturalist. It is a bit 'twee', to use one of my mother's old phrases, and it contains a lot of the old clichés about man swinging down from the trees and nature red in tooth and claw. However, it reads well and contains, amongst other things, fascinating accounts of bat behaviour, pollination mechanisms and primate communication. It is as good as anything written by perhaps the world's most famous naturalist, David Attenborough, and should therefore go a long way towards encouraging the next generation of rain-forest watchers.

C.J. Humphries, Botany Department, British Museum (Natural History), London, UK.

## **Wildlife and Wilderness: An Artist's World**

Keith Shackleton

Clive Holloway Books, 1986, 120 pp, HB £15

## **Ship in the Wilderness**

Jim Snyder and Keith Shackleton

Dent, 1986, 208 pp, HB £14.95

Art is the main element of these two books, each of which proves that there really is such a thing as wildlife art. In one it is the art of the painter, and in the other the art of the photographer. Keith Shackleton is one of the few British wildlife artists to have a reputation in the United States where there exists a great appreciation of paintings that show animals in their environment. His *Wildlife and Wilderness* is a collection of 49 paintings, whose subjects range from giant petrels to the men of No. 45 Commando Royal Marines on

*Oryx* Vol 21 No 2, April 1987