

terms as practicable with such a full treatment; it should be well within the understanding of the ordinary non-specialist reader or intelligent young person who has done some school biology.

The illustrations – more than a thousand in all – are outstanding: excellent diagrams, mostly in colour, and a lavish and well-chosen selection of some of the finest examples of modern colour photography, mostly of animals in their native surroundings, and all shown to the best advantage on the large demy 4to pages. Unfortunately, far too many have no indication of scale either in the captions or text, which may confuse readers not familiar with some of the less well-known groups of invertebrates. An extensive glossary and good index complete a splendid reference book suitable for library, school or home use, and at current prices good value for money.

JOHN CLEGG

An Irish Beast Book: a natural history of Ireland's furred wildlife, by J. S. Fairley. Blackstaff Press, Belfast, £1.95 (hard back £4.95).

Those who follow the literature of Irish natural history are aware that J. S. Fairley is the most prolific author of notes and papers on Irish mammals. Now he has followed up his bibliography with an excellent book, the first ever to be devoted solely to the subject. Ireland's fauna is a greatly impoverished sample of the Palaearctic fauna as a whole, but this only makes it the more worth studying. The book will be welcomed not only by mammalogists everywhere, but by teachers and all who are interested, or seek to interest others, in the wildlife of the whole island. Animals and plants have never recognised the man-made borders of Ireland, nor, thankfully, have naturalists.

RICHARD FITTER

Man and Wild Life, by L. Harrison Matthews. Groom-Helm, £4.95.

Man and Natural Resources, by Sir Cedric Stanton Hicks. Groom-Helm, £5.25.

Dr Harrison Matthews's basic premise is that man has set himself above his environment, and the natural ecosystem it supports, in a dominant role in which he may have the will, but not always the means, to control. His treatment deals largely with man's relationship to particular groups of animals, and within this restricted field, he presents a scholarly, well documented and highly readable account. Mammal and bird examples are used to illustrate the effects of man depredations on wild populations; other examples, mainly from invertebrates, indicate how lack of control can lead to pest situations, frequently beyond the wit of man to solve.

Consideration of several groups of animals leads from an historical review of man's interaction with the group to an appraisal of the present situation. All too many of the cases considered can be seen as an indictment of man's lack of sensitivity and forethought. The dangers of unwise use both to exploiter and exploited species are clearly reinforced, and the author emphasises that man's apparent dominion over nature is not substantiated by the known facts. The reader may infer from the evidence that human society has rendered itself unfit for its environment and hence, like ill-adapted animal species, is at risk of extinction. The author offers little by way of practical solutions, and the reader is left with the feeling that any action taken for the joint protection of man and wildlife will be too little and too late.

The second author presents a miscellany of views about what is wrong with man's past and present use of natural resources based on a similar premise: that man has divorced himself from his functional place in natural ecosystems. Well known problems such as pollution by industrial effluents, misuse of the soil and the population explosion are examined in a repetitious manner, often unsupported by