

unfolded before him, and show his unusual ability to disentangle salient facts as he saw them and reassemble them so that he could give considered opinions and advice to those who sought them – little of which, sadly, was ever acted upon.

There is no doubt that Fraser Darling was one of the most important ecologists of the twentieth century. The editor writes: 'Fraser Darling was the pioneer of the ethos of conservation, uniting Nature and human nature in a single harmony. He had an *écologique* sense of right and wrong in the use of the countryside and an unremitting sense of outrage at man's maltreatment of Nature. his pre-occupation was with the Dignity of Life, the absolute beauty and perfectness of Nature'.

The editor, who was a colleague of Sir Frank's and knew him well, gives an all too brief but nevertheless interesting account of his life, which adds colour to an already fascinating series of journals.

David Lovatt Smith

They Dined on Eland: The Story of the Acclimatisation Societies by Christopher Lever (Quiller Press, London, 1992, ISBN 1 870948 59 9, 224 pp., HB £18.50)

Acclimatization is such a mouthful that author and publisher have adopted what appears at first sight to be a somewhat misleading title. They did, of course, dine on eland, but this was not the main objective of the acclimatizers, only their colourful beginning. But in the end was there ever much more to their activities? It does not help that acclimatization has had so many meanings, and needs to be distinguished from domesti-

cation, naturalization and adaptation to feral living. The author's definition, with which I agree, is 'grown or become habituated to a new climate', whether or not the animal or plant in question has become naturalized, i.e. has become an independent population in the wild, unaided by man.

Acclimatization was a typical activity of our vigorous and experimental Victorian ancestors. The only atypical thing about it was that it began in France, when Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (not to be confused with his father Etienne G. St-H.) founded the *Société Zoologique d'Acclimatation* in 1854. Not to be outdone, the British, led by the celebrated naturalist Frank Buckland (who could afford to be eccentric because his father was an Anglican dean), launched the Acclimatisation Society 6 years later. Its foundation pre-echoed that of the FFPS's forbear, the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire formed 33 years later. We read that 'a number of gentlemen interested in the Acclimatisation of Foreign Animals and Birds in the United Kingdom have determined to form themselves into a Society'. The gentlemen included three marquesses, two earls and two viscounts. They ate the eland at 'the now celebrated Eland dinner, when for the first time the freshly killed haunch of an African beast was placed on the table of the Aldersgate Tavern'. (*Guinness Book of Records*, are you listening?). Elands were then already flourishing in at least four noblemen's parks.

We must be grateful to Christopher Lever, our leading student of introduced animals, for bringing before us, with his usual meticulous care, the most detailed account ever of the

Acclimatisation Society, which lasted for 7 years, and spawned offspring in Australia, New Zealand, the United States and even Hawaii. What did the Society achieve? Precious little, it seems, for it was criticized for not having made one single useful addition to our fauna, and this is why it faded out so soon. Dining on eland proved to be an insufficient basis for a society. Luckily the SPWFE proved more effective and, as FFPS, is still going strong.

Richard Fitter
FFPS Vice-President

MAMMALS

Mammals of the Indomalayan Region: A Systematic Review by G. B. Corbet and J. E. Hill (Oxford University Press, Oxford, and Natural History Museum, London, 1992, ISBN 019 854693 9, 488 pp. HB £60.00)

As defined in this work, the Indomalayan Region extends from Pakistan in the west to the Philippines and Moluccas in the east, and north to central China and the Ryukyu Islands. This is the first attempt to review the mammal fauna of the whole region and includes 1041 species. It will be an invaluable reference work, providing a major advance in the understanding of the mammal fauna of a very rich region and its relationships to surrounding regions, and a foundation for the preparation of more country-oriented accounts and guides. Such guides have appeared for little of the region in the last 20 years and it has remained an area rather poorly served for compilation of faunal lists and identification aids.

ORYX VOL 27 NO 2 APRIL 1993

An introduction discusses the definition of the region and its included mammal fauna and divides the area into six subdivisions (most with further subdivisions) based on their mammal composition. The processes of assigning available material to a classification in line with current nomenclatural practice are also discussed. In undertaking such a wide ranging review, the authors have tended to accept an existing view where available; nevertheless, it is somewhat surprising that only two new names are proposed and only 14 'original, unpublished or unorthodox' nomenclatural combinations are highlighted.

The main body of the book is the systematic account. Species accounts give synonymy, range (mostly also included in maps), variation and remarks on systematics and status. It is not a field guide, but there are keys or identification tables for most genera and species and for the higher taxa. The bats (307 species) were compiled by Hill, the rest by Corbet. Six appendices include a simple check list of species and mini biographies of all those who have made important contributions to mammal studies in the area. There is a bibliography of 3000 references.

While of obvious importance in understanding the fauna of the region, conservation does not figure in the volume, except that CITES and IUCN red list categories are included where appropriate. Thus Mammals of the Indomalayan Region is not a conservation book, but will doubtless be a key reference for years to come. There naturally remain many mysteries about the status and distribution of specimens and species and the authors have clearly had to make decisions between conflicting opinions on

classifications, but this review is much needed and will be widely welcomed.

A.M.Hutson

The Bat Conservation Trust

Wild Pigs of the United States: Their History, Morphology and Current Status by John J. Mayer and I. Lehr Brisbin Jr (University of Georgia Press, 1991, ISBN 0 8203 1239 8, 313 pp., HB \$40)

More than 30 exotic mammal species have become naturalized in the United States since the earliest European colonial settlements were established nearly half a millennia ago. Pigs were amongst the first of these exotics to establish free-ranging populations and, with various recent estimates of between 0.5 and 2 million wild individuals ranging through at least 16 states, they are now among the most abundant and widely distributed of all introduced forms. Being both adaptable and prolific they are also among the most aggressive and destructive of these exotics, and they are regarded by most US agencies, land managers and environmental interest groups as a nuisance, if not a major environmental pest. Contrarily, they have long been a coveted target of recreational hunters and game meat producers, many of whom (along with a few equally irresponsible landowners) have actively facilitated their spread through deliberate or careless releases of founder stocks.

The authors have chosen not to explore the issues and concerns relating to these releases and the continuing expansion of many of the wild populations of these animals. Rather, they have painstakingly traced and documented the history of the releases, the present distri-

bution and (legal) status of the descendant pigs in each union state, and the origins, affinities and morphology of the various introduced stocks, which they have attempted to distinguish (somewhat unsatisfactorily) as 'European wild boar', 'feral hogs' and 'wild boar × feral hybrids'. While all this is manifest in the title, and a worthwhile exercise in itself, the resulting text is unfortunately far too long and is tortuously exacting in its detail and analyses. Moreover, by concentrating on the least contentious (and in some ways least interesting) aspects of these introductions they have not only omitted discussion of most of the topical issues, but have failed to develop any really useful conclusions or recommendations about the future management of these animals.

William Oliver

*Chairman Pigs and Peccaries
Specialist Group and
FFPS Council Member*

ECOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMICS

The Balance of Nature? Ecological Issues in the Conservation of Species and Communities by Stuart L. Pimm (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1992, ISBN 0 226 66830 4, 434 pp., SB £21.50/\$26.95)

This important, interesting and readable book addresses 'scientific issues in conservation biology'. Stuart Pimm is concerned about the 'impending catastrophe' of extinctions and in this book examines what we know about the stability of populations and natural communities. Stability is reduced to a number