

Book Reviews

Primate Utilization and Conservation, edited by **Gordon Bermant and Donald G. Lindburg**. John Wiley, £8.90.

This is a book of fascinating and frightening statistics – a collection of fifteen papers resulting from a conference in Seattle in 1972. Although inevitably outdated on some issues, it is the best single reference work covering the scale of primate utilisation in relation to wild resources, the threat to future medical research caused by dwindling wild populations, and current attitudes towards primate conservation.

The extent of primate use is horrifying. Between 1966 and 1971 the USA imported between 50,000 and 85,000 primates per year for research; the figures for UK are about 9000. Can these enormous numbers really be necessary? Most of the authors agree they are not. Primates are used wastefully and requirements could be cut drastically.

Natural, artificial and political factors render wild supplies of primates unreliable; some may dry up completely. For this reason, and also to relieve wild populations, the authors strongly advocate further promotion of artificial breeding programmes to meet medical research needs. We cannot predict what species will prove useful to medical research in the future; we must protect all species irrespective of their current uses. Here, fortunately, the goals of the primate user and the conservationist are identical.

The attitudes and conclusions reached at this conference have been of great importance in forming the views applied by the IUCN Primate Specialist Group to current conservation programmes, and also the Guidelines for the use of Primates in Medical Research which have been drawn up by IUCN and submitted for adoption to the World Health Organisation.

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Wild Cats of the World, by **C. A. W. Guggisberg**. David & Charles, £5.50.

The Wild Canids: their systematics, behavioural ecology and evolution, edited by **M. W. Fox**. Van Nostrand Reinhold, £10.20.

Hyaenas, by **Hans Kruuk**. Oxford University Press, £5.00.

It is perhaps not surprising that, second only to the primates, the larger carnivores are popular subjects for behavioural studies. The social behaviour of dogs, hyaenas and lions allows many parallels to be drawn in speculating about the evolution of human behaviour during our own predatory past. At the same time our long-standing role as potential prey of the large carnivores has produced a rich but heavily biased store of fact, belief and myth as a starting point for more organised study. Each of these three books provides a great deal of authoritative information on one family of carnivores but in very different ways.

Dr Guggisberg's volume on cats is a comprehensive account dealing in turn with all 35 members of the family, with the emphasis on behaviour and ecology. The accounts of the East African species, large and small, benefit from the author's long residence in Kenya and his close involvement with carnivores, but his compilations on other species are clearly the result of an original sampling of the primary literature from which he has extracted many items of interest missed by other recent compilers. But of many species and especially the forest cats, we are still abysmally ignorant. This applies to many South American cats, such as the margay, and the situation is little better in tropical Asia even for so large an animal as the clouded leopard. This is a valuable and very readable source without technicalities on a