

ivory, especially large tusks, from the hinterland to trade for luxury goods with the Sultanate of Oman and with India. Man certainly for long had had a disrupting influence on the elephants of the hinterland—now partly in the Tsavo Park.

The author's dictum that man is 'detested by all wild animals of the animal kingdom' and 'hated by all other forms of life', is puzzling as well as anthropomorphic and curiously inconsistent when related to the behaviour of her 'orphans', large and small.

C. R. S. PITMAN

The Evergreen Forests of Malawi, by J. D. Chapman and F. White. Commonwealth Forestry Institute, University of Oxford, 1970. £3 or \$7.50.

Malawi is a small country by African standards but it has a delightful variety of topography and plant and animal life within its borders. This book by two dedicated botanists is a detailed and painstaking account of the small patches of evergreen forest which are scattered throughout the country, mainly in the uplands.

This is a specialists' book, for the topographers and serious students of Africa's vegetation; animals and birds are only mentioned in a short section under *The Environment, Human Activities* as 'other animals', which begins with the surprising statement that 'almost nothing is known'; this is far from the case. A chapter on fauna of evergreen forests would have been a valuable addition; the bird life is of particular interest.

Part 1 deals with the environment, human influences, plant geography and classification; Part 2 is a detailed description of the forests. It is an interesting fact that certain species of trees which occur in southern Africa reach their northern limits in Malawi while other species reach their southern limits there,—an indication that Malawi is a meeting-place of the southern and eastern African floras.

The description of the forests is well-illustrated with several profile diagrams of their composition and structure; perhaps the most pleasing feature is the sixty excellent black and white photographs of the forests taken by Chapman which give an excellent idea of what they look like. Of considerable interest are those of the Mlanje cedar *Widdringtonia whytei*, a species which reaches its northern limit on Mlanje Mountain and which is a truly magnificent tree in its setting of mist-shrouded peaks.

There is a good list of references but the maps are poor; one on a very small scale shows the position of mountains and upland areas in Malawi, and the other the phytogeographical regions of Africa. A large-scale folding map seems to be a serious omission from an otherwise admirable work which is a valuable contribution to the study of Africa's vegetation and forests.

RICHARD WILLAN

Biogeography and Ecology of Madagascar, by G. Richard-Vindard and R. Battistini. Junk, The Hague, DG 190.

Any naturalist with a special interest in Madagascar must have wished for an authoritative reference source giving both a concise account of the physical characteristics of the island and a general description of the flora and fauna. Richard-Vindard and Battistini have collected a well-balanced set of papers written by some of the foremost French natural scientists concerned with Madagascar, and their volume provides a useful guide which should adequately meet this need. There are contributions on the landscape, geology, climatology, soils, vegetation and animal life (insects, arachnids, terrestrial molluscs, fishes, reptiles, birds, mammals). In addition there is ample discussion of the serious problems of erosion and deforestation and