

Reviews

Production, Pollution, Protection. By W. B. Yapp. Taylor & Francis, London, 1972. x + 184 pages; 9 black-and-white photographs; 10 line drawings. £2.75 (hardback), £2.00 (paperback).

The aim of each book in the Wykeham Science Series is the introduction of the present state of a science to school leavers or young undergraduates. This latest title is a fascinating one that should tempt a far wider readership from the many millions now expressing some concern for their environment. The topics are dealt with in just four extensive chapters, and in each the thread of contact with the environment is maintained.

With a field so vast, it is hardly surprising that many of the biological examples selected are highly personal choices: one would express regret if the opposite were the case, for most are both interesting and apposite. Ornithologists, normally conservatively entangled in the problems of auks or Peregrines, should note the many references to other biological fields and learn from them (which is where this reasonably compact book has its charm and why it can be suggested as valuably broadening reading). They should not be discouraged by the rather indigestible wealth of detail in a few sections—notably microbiology and chemistry—from assimilating the author's thesis that 'The danger now is not so much, as was thought at one time, that the world's population will outrun the food supply, as that long before that happens the world will no longer be worth living in.'

J. J. M. FLEGG

Wildfowl in Captivity. By Richard Mark Martin. John Gifford, London, 1972. 157 pages; 32 colour photographs. £1.75.

The keeping of a few wildfowl has recently become quite commonplace. Ducks in captivity can look better than almost any other birds, since a cage is unnecessary and a small pond appears so much their natural element that, even when flightless, they are often neither obviously unhappy nor unsightly. A thoroughly modern book, giving practical advice on 'ornamental' ducks, geese and swans, had been lacking, and *Wildfowl in Captivity* is certainly nicely illustrated and pleasantly written by someone who clearly enjoys his birds. It is also reasonably cheap and short—I think too short.

Mr Martin should surely not have tried to cover the whole wildfowl group, since many of the species he lists are unavailable to his readers; more space could then have been given to the popular ones. The advice is necessarily so brief as to be sometimes misleading. For example, a number of species are said to be 'seen to advantage if kept full-winged, should not stray'. As a generalisation, this is true only if the birds are reared in the place where they fly or have a few relatives

pinioned on the ground. It would be a pity if his advice led someone to think that a full-winged whistling duck, taken far from home and friends, would not stray upon release. Then, a nesting wigwam for geese and ducks is illustrated and the author says of the structure, 'built well, will last for many years'. This may be so, but if a bird's clutch is removed from it for artificial incubation (a possibility mentioned), then, as a nest site for that female, it has been predated and often ruined forever. A newcomer to the field might well think, 'She laid there last year, she obviously likes it, the structure is sound, there should be no need to supply anything else', and have no idea why she never lays there again.

These and other aspects of waterfowl husbandry need fuller explanation, so that the natural logic is obvious and aviculturists are encouraged to see things from their birds' viewpoint. There are a few errors: Bewick's Swan does not lay the largest egg of all wildfowl, and 'aberrant' does not mean 'akin to'.

Someone keeping a few ducks in the garden will certainly find things to interest him here. The real beginner might also try to borrow a copy of the M.A.F.F. Bulletin *Ducks and Geese* which gives much additional basic knowledge, although, unfortunately, it is now out of print.

JANET KEAR

ALSO RECEIVED

- All Colour Book of Birds*. Octopus Books, London, 1972. 99p.
Birds of Prey. By John Rignall. Purnell, London, 1971. £1.00.
Flight and Nature. By M. W. Saunders. Privately printed, Chaldon, 1972. £3.00.
Fugletraekket og dets Gæder. By F. Salomonsen. Munksgaard, Copenhagen, 1972. Revised edition. Kr. 77.05.
Gifts of an Eagle. By Kent Durden. Harvill Press, London, 1972. £2.25.
How to Talk to Birds. By Richard C. Davids. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1972. \$6.95.
The Storm Petrel and the Owl of Athena. By Louis J. Halle. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1970. £3.60.
The Treasury of Birds. Octopus Books, London, 1972. £1.25.

Also the following titles in the series 'Die Neue Brehm-Bücherei', A. Ziemsen Verlag, Wittenberg Lutherstadt, East Germany:

- Die Eiderenten*. By S. M. Uspenski. No. 452, 1972. 7.80 M.
Vogelfang und Vogelberingung. By Hans Bub. Part 1, no. 359, 1970, 15.20 M.; part 2, no. 377, 1972, 14.00 M.; part 4, no. 409, 1971, 15.20 M.