

The tale is well established in this book that, given firearms, Eskimos and Indians seem unable to think in terms of conserving caribou. There is wild berserk killing at river crossings by people unable to believe the numbers are not infinite and unknowing that over northern Canada the numbers of men are increasing. The nadir seems to have been 1958, since when numbers have increased from the 200,000 level. The operation of a caribou cycle of numbers has not been overlooked, but it cannot be verified. Suffice it to say that numbers having got so low, human predation has been much less severe. The human factor has not been just the killing but the careless burning of winter lichen ranges as well. All this could be brought under virtual control if education and an ethos of conservation grew. The greater money income in the north could also deflect pressure on the caribou.

Kelsall has all these factors well in mind, and as decline in the caribou has left a 9/10ths void in the niche structure, a prudent policy of tundra land use will concern itself with rehabilitation of the herds. Canada, through its Banfields, Kelsalls and their colleagues, is doing a positive job by the barren-ground caribou, and the world conservation movement is grateful.

F. FRASER DARLING

The Roe Deer of Cranborne Chase by Richard Prior. OUP, 50s.

This book describes the study and management of roe deer in the Forestry Commission woodlands at Cranborne Chase, in Dorset, from 1962 to 1966. The first half is largely concerned with an account of the deer's ecology and behaviour; the second is principally devoted to management and procedures for the collection of essential data. There is an appendix on parasites and diseases in roe by A. MacDiarmid.

It is always difficult to avoid clichés in reviewing books. The phrase which comes most readily for this one is 'wealth of practical information'. Observations on movement, rutting behaviour, fawning, and roe calling are described in considerable detail. Guidance on ageing animals by their appearance, the differentiation of antler shapes, and the seasonal arrangements of culling operations are among numerous subjects which should interest both the professional and the amateur deer watcher. At the end, I was almost prepared to accept that, with practice, unmarked roebucks can be readily recognised as individuals.

The author has a tendency to consider each facet of a problem in isolation; he presents his evidence, discusses it and draws his conclusions before moving on to the next topic. Where conclusions on interrelated subjects are not entirely complementary, as, for example, in the chapter on territory, this system leads to confusion. In these circumstances, a more conventional presentation, involving one discussion and a set of conclusions at the end of the chapter, would have been preferable.

My second complaint is that the quality of this carefully reasoned treatise is too frequently impaired by conjecture. For example, does Cranborne Chase (or any other roe deer habitat in Great Britain) ever reach the stage when it can be claimed that 'the natural food is nearly exhausted' (p. 16)? Is it 'obvious', or even likely, that the velvet on fully developed antlers causes roebuck intense irritation (p. 109)? The reader cannot be expected to accept claims that plantation fencing to exclude roe is too expensive to be considered as a preventive measure (p. 158) or that uncontrolled damage to young trees is invariably serious (numerous comments) without some supporting evidence.

It would be quite unjust, however, to end this review on a critical note. The book is very informative, very readable, and is certainly recommended.

C. W. HOLLOWAY