

**Uganda Quest**, by Ernest Neal. Collins, £2.25.

**The Elephants of Knysna**, by Nick Carter. Purnell, Cape Town, R.3.75.

Dr Neal's quest was for the medium-sized carnivores of the Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda, and this eventually led him to study the banded mongoose about which he gives much new information. But there is much more to this splendid book than an account of these small animals, interesting as they are. Using a deceptively simple narrative form, he describes most of the major animals of the park – elephants, hippos, buffaloes, lions, hyenas, bats and birds – their relationships with each other and with the savanna on which they live. He also describes his nocturnal wanderings in search of the more elusive carnivores. There are fascinating accounts, for example, of a serval hunting by sound in the long grass and of a lioness driving hyenas from a kill. He also explains most perceptively how to identify eyes reflected by headlights in the dark. Indeed, he demonstrates continuously what can be achieved in a relatively short time by a really experienced observer. I may be prejudiced in favour of the Queen Elizabeth Park but I have enjoyed this book as much as anything I have read about African wildlife for a very long time. It is an excellent portrait of the area, superbly illustrated by twenty-four pages of the author's own colour photographs.

Nick Carter's book is not of the same quality. It is the popular account of the Knysna elephant survey mentioned briefly in *Oryx*, 10 6: a prolonged game of 'hide and seek' with a small group of forest-living elephants which are both elusive and thoroughly sophisticated in their dealings with man. A good story is spoiled, however, by a somewhat affected style and a reluctance to give straightforward facts when these are called for. But the author does not exaggerate when writing about the elephants or when describing what happens when you get too close to them by mistake – their eyesight can be embarrassingly good. The few survivors live further south than any other elephants in Africa and are in serious need of proper protection. Let us hope that Nick Carter's recommendations are accepted and that a permanent sanctuary is established in the Harkerville Forest.

RENNIE BERE

**Last Survivors** by Noel Simon and Paul Géroudet. Patrick Stephens, £4.75.

If the authors of this work had attempted to cover all the 275 mammals and 300 odd birds on the *Red Data Books'* lists of endangered species, they would have had to compress to such an extent that even their large volume could have been little more than a catalogue, useful for reference. Instead they have chosen to produce an eminently readable book by selecting 36 mammals and 12 birds in various degrees of danger of extinction to illustrate the problems of conservation. This gives them scope to write a series of more leisurely essays with descriptions of each of the chosen species, their breeding habitat, food and range, the numbers still surviving, the dangers to which they are exposed and the steps that are being taken – or that need to be taken – for their protection. In this way they are able to devote as much as a dozen pages to the tiger.

Their choice of species is inevitably arbitrary but they have tried hard to make it representative both of the zoological orders and of the

main geographical regions. Thus, they include the Arabian oryx, the Spanish imperial eagle, the Javan rhinoceros, the Galapagos penguin, the mountain gorilla and the blue whale. They have likewise deliberately selected their examples to illustrate the varied political and economic difficulties as well as the ecological problems with which conservationists are faced.

Although authoritative and well documented, this work is presumably intended primarily for the layman interested in birds, beasts and their survival rather than for the specialist. It is pleasantly written, with a minimum of professional jargon, and the fact that the bird sections are translated from the French is barely detectable. Each species discussed is illustrated in colour, almost all of them with handsome full-page paintings by Helmut Diller and Paul Barruel.

In a brief preface, H.R.H. the Prince of the Netherlands emphasises how little time is left if these fascinating animals are to be saved and boldly asks for 'a few tens of millions', the sort of money needed to finance *action now*.

G. T. CORLEY SMITH

### **In the Shadow of Man, by Jane van Lawick-Goodall Collins, £2.50**

To praise adequately this fascinating book is impossible; to call it merely remarkable would be a deliberate understatement. Never before has human endeavour achieved such striking results from the study of wild creatures. It was Jane's inexhaustible patience and enthusiastic dedication which enabled her to carry on, in the face of numerous set-backs, her research on these 'amazing creatures who can teach us so much about ourselves even whilst we become increasingly fascinated by them in their own right'. The initial long period of disheartening frustrations she dismisses with commendable brevity, and remains silent on the worst of the inevitable hardships. Her well-merited reward was the confidence and trust she inspired, during her ten-years' investigation, in these powerful and not wholly reliable primates, to such an extent as to be regarded as one of themselves, so that they would actually touch her and take food from her; even after long absences they remembered her.

It was their uninhibited friendship which enabled her to study meticulously every aspect of their mode of life. She is not anthropomorphic; her observations are factual, and she writes, 'if we survey the whole range of the postural and gestural communication signals of chimpanzees and humans we find striking similarities in many instances'; also, 'his social structure and methods of communication with his fellows are elaborate'. There is much in this story which demands special attention, — the thrill at witnessing the first use of a tool; the discovery of the chimpanzees' highly carnivorous tendency as she watched a communal feast on a piglet victim; the amusing episode of Mike's noisy and threatening seizure of the leadership of his group with the aid of three empty paraffin cans; and the pathos of the narrative of the chimpanzee polio outbreak. But there are two other persons who play an important part in this delightful story; one is her baby son, Grub, who for safety had to be kept in a cage; the other her husband, Hugo, whose accomplishments as photographer need no elaboration; one has only to glance at the superb illustrations to appreciate their excellence. The family trees of all Jane's subjects together with the distinctive facial expressions — reproduced inside the covers — are of outstanding interest.