

life, as well as discussing their enemies and their relations with man. The author is inclined to overstress that bears are not generally the dangerously aggressive villains as popularly portrayed; personal experience of the sloth bear in India indicates this is not a matter for complacency. Leslie Brown, who has for decades indulged in intimate study of the fierce, magnificent eagles, mainly in Kenya and Scotland, provides entertaining, informative reading about these 'powerful, rapacious, diurnal birds of prey'. African eagles figure extensively in the illustrations. *Gorillas* constitutes an intriguing analysis of where these huge apes are found, how they live and grow up, and their attitude towards man. The alleged ferocity of the gorilla is properly debunked and its natural benign temperament, for which the reviewer can vouch from first hand experience, emphasised: enthralling, lucid and informative.

C. R. S. PITMAN

Aldabra Alone, by Tony Beamish. Allen & Unwin, 50s.

This is a narrative of the author's visit, early in 1967, to a truly unique atoll—many of its animals and plants are found on Aldabra alone; a description of the island and its wildlife gradually unfolds. With a few companions, Tony Beamish was able to make a circuit of the island, partly on land and in places with difficulty over honeycombed and spiky coral, partly by boat on the central lagoon when the tide permitted, and partly by sea outside the fringing reef. A dated itinerary would have usefully supplemented the sketch-map; and an index to the scattered mentions of species would have helped. The Indian Ocean giant tortoise has here its last natural home, but exists in prodigious numbers. The special birds, notably unafraid of man, include the flightless white-throated rail, the Aldabra brush-warbler and the Aldabra drongo; and there are large colonies of some of the pantropical seabirds. Interwoven is another narrative, that of the battle that was being successfully waged thousands of miles away to save this unspoilt paradise and scientific treasure-house from being wrecked for ever by myopic military vandals.

To those, like the reviewer, who have no more than set foot on the island, and briefly sailed its interior lagoon (and by mischance the surrounding sea!) in a rubber dinghy, this account fills many gaps. To those who have not even had that experience, it must surely conjure up a vivid picture of a strange place, full of bright beauty and fascinating interest. The fine colour plates, from photographs by the author and others, greatly assist. Sir Julian Huxley contributes a foreword, and Dr W. R. P. Bourne an appendix on the birds.

LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON

The Wild Mammals of Malaya, by Lord Medway. Oxford University Press, £6 5s.

Mammals in Hawaii, by P. Quentin Tomich. Bishop Museum Press, Honolulu, \$5.00.

One could hardly find two more dissimilar mammalian faunas than those of Malaya and Hawaii—the former with 200 species of land mammals, all but one or two indigenous, the latter with probably only one land mammal that might have reached the islands by its own efforts, an American bat.

Lord Medway's volume is unique and valuable on several counts. It provides a concise account of distribution, identification characters, habits and life-history of all species, large and small, in the Malayan