

particularly unsatisfactory. Most of the book is an account of the different insect groups, in which many fascinating details of structure, coloration and ecology are given, and on the whole, a good balance is struck between scientific accuracy and popular appeal. Separate sections on social and water insects complete the work.

This is a book to be dipped into rather than read, but the author's superb paintings and drawings will remain in the memory when the text is forgotten. Unfortunately the price puts it beyond the reach of many naturalists.

M. G. MORRIS

**The Oxford Book of Vertebrates**, by **Marion Nixon**; illustrations by **Derek Whiteley**. Oxford University Press, £3.50.

This latest volume in the series of four by the same publisher completes an attractive survey of the animal life of Great Britain. The present book deals with cyclostomes, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals including the aquatic mammals, such as the seals, dolphins and whales. Fifty-seven of the 96 coloured plates are devoted to fish. Opposite each colour plate detailed information on each of the species illustrated has been ably summarised. The coverage of species is remarkably complete, even to the extent of including the humantin (shark), a rare straggler to our shores, only one of which has been taken since 1877; and the blue whale, which reaches the latitude of Shetland sometimes in July and August but of which only four have been stranded on British coasts since records were started in 1913. It is useful, also, to have details and illustrations of introduced species in all groups.

The colour plates are not as successful as in earlier volumes. In the review copy a sickly green frequently obtrudes in the background or in the colouring of the animal, as in the smooth newt, the back of which is emerald green, a shade not seen in nature and certainly not the olive green mentioned in the text.

At the end of the book is a helpful classification of the vertebrates, a geological time-scale to show when the main groups first appeared in the fossil record, a general account of the vertebrates of the British Isles, a good glossary and a list of sources of further information. This volume will be a most useful reference book; in conjunction with its companion volumes it makes a valuable library on the British fauna generally.

JOHN CLEGG

**Neuginea**, by **T. Schultze-Westrum**. Kümmerly & Frey, S.Fr.48.

Dr Schultze-Westrum, a geologist and anthropologist as well as a zoologist, spent 18 months in Papua New Guinea collecting the material on which this book is based. In a remarkably short space he presents a clear and eminently readable outline of the country's enormously rich flora and fauna as well as its fascinating people, and the all too familiar pressures and problems which threaten the future wellbeing of both. With the 83 pages of text there are 95 of stupendous photographs, each with an explanatory paragraph. The author shows how the problems of the people and the wildlife cannot be regarded separately, and how the immediate creation of appropriate national parks (6 areas are proposed) could benefit both these and the country's economy. It is a great pity that this interesting book is not yet available in English, but the photographs may tempt even non-readers of German.

NICOLA BOISSARD