

Field Guide of Whales and Dolphins, by W.F.J. Morzer Bruyns, Uitgeverij Tor, Amsterdam, US \$25.

I find this a fascinating book, as will anybody else who has been on a sea voyage and seen whales or dolphins without being able to name them. I count it a misfortune that it was awaiting my return from a visit to the Galapagos Islands, where I saw five kinds of cetacean; with its aid I would have been confident of identifying all five, instead of only three. Even at a distance of 6000 miles Captain Mörzer Bruyns has satisfied me that what I thought were Pacific white-sided dolphins - because they had a white blaze on the flank - were in fact killer whales, which also have a white blaze. Never from henceforth will I go on a sea voyage without this book.

Field identification of mammals has lagged a long way behind that of birds, and it has hitherto been impossible to find, let alone recommend, a book on how to identify whales. Captain Mörzer Bruyns, able amateur zoologist as well as sea captain of long experience, and twin brother to a distinguished Dutch professional zoologist, has very ably filled the bill. Yet there are still so many gaps in our knowledge that a revised edition will clearly be needed after he and others have done another ten years' field work.

The clue to the excellence of the book is the map on the end papers, showing the numerous long sea voyages the author has made over the past forty years, for eighteen of which he has been steadily accumulating the notes and sketches that have enabled him to illustrate 96 species of cetacean in colour and describe them in the text from personal observation. If professional zoologists disagree with some of his suggestions for classifying whales and dolphins, it will be up to them to do as much field work to disprove him.

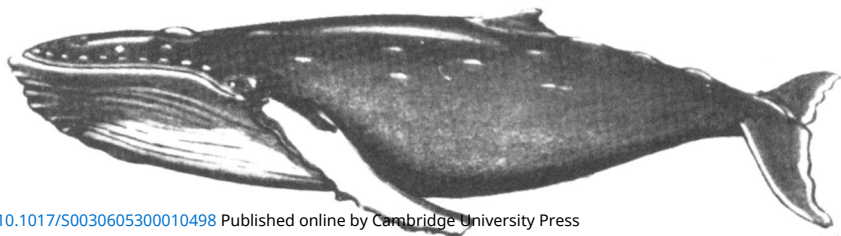
RICHARD FITTER

Lost Leviathan, by F.D. Ommañney. Hutchinson, £3.00.

The Year of the Whale, by Victor B. Scheffer. Souvenir Press, £1.75.

Nearly fifty years ago the Discovery Committee began the studies at one of the whaling stations at South Georgia which laid the foundations of our knowledge of the life histories of the great whales hunted by twentieth century whalers. Dr Ommañney took part in this work and has now combined his recollections of those early days with an account of the whaling industry and of the biology of whales, especially those of commercial importance. Present-day assessments of the size and status of the various stocks of whales are still based on essentially the same routine of collecting observations and anatomical material as in his time. His vivid accounts of work on the whaling platform ashore and afloat, and of life on a whale catcher, therefore give an accurate picture of the pleasures and pains which lie behind the biologist's statistics of populations. Until the decline of the Norwegian Antarctic fleets in the

HUMPBAC WHALE - a drawing from the *Field Guide* reviewed above



mid 1960s, much of the whaling technique and many of the personnel remained little changed also.

The separate accounts of the biology of blue, fin, humpback, sei and sperm whales are generally up-to-date, but it is unfortunate that the final chapter on whale numbers, while giving a brief outline of the theory on which current stock assessments are based, does not include any more recent population estimates for the different species than those produced by the special Committee of Three Scientists for the International Whaling Commission in 1963.

There is an appendix of scientific names, an occasionally unreliable reference list and a detailed index. The book is illustrated with diagrams and photographs.

Dr Scheffer's story follows a sperm whale calf from birth through its first year of life in the North Pacific ocean. The fictional episodes alternate with extensive 'information' passages which provide a factual background to the story and are themselves supported by notes on sources. There is also a select annotated list of seven sperm whaling classics, both factual and fictional. 'Little Calf' is however no rival for 'Moby Dick'.

S.G. BROWN

Hawaiian Land Mammals, by Raymond J. Kramer. Tuttle, Rutland, Vt, \$12.50.

Wild Animals in New Zealand, by A.L. Poole and others. Reed, Wellington, £2.75

A book on the mammals of Hawaii written in the early 18th century, before the arrival of Captain Cook, would have been a slim volume indeed. So equally would one on the mammals of New Zealand. For almost all the wild animals of both archipelagos are the descendants of mammals accidentally or deliberately released by man. The native mammal fauna of Hawaii consists only of a bat and a seal, that of New Zealand only of two bats and two seals. Yet even apart from such escaped domestic animals as feral dogs, cats, horses, donkeys, cattle, sheep and goats, Hawaii now has a dozen wild mammals and New Zealand a score or more.

Hawaii's selection, described most thoroughly and interestingly by Mr. Kramer, includes the brush-tailed rock wallaby (a Red Data Book animal in its native Australia), the small Indian mongoose and the axis deer, not to mention a group inadvisedly imported in recent years by the Hawaii State Division of Fish and Game, such as the black-tailed deer, the pronghorn antelope and the mouflon. Some of the imported mammals have done fearful damage to the native vegetation, and have even succeeded in wiping out native animals dependent on that vegetation. For instance overgrazing by rabbits on Laysan Island caused the extinction of an endemic rail, warbler and honeycreeper. The rabbits even succeeded in driving out a fellow interloper, the guinea pig. The whole book is a salutary demonstration of the irresponsibility and folly of introducing alien animals, especially on islands. Would that it could be taken to heart by the many American and Russian zoologists who are today light-heartedly introducing all kinds of strange animals in their respective countries.

The New Zealand book is a less polished piece of work, but has the advantage of excellent photographs by J.H. Johns instead of rather indifferently reproduced black and white illustrations by Khan Pannell.