

expenses. The importance of this growing problem was emphasised by the inclusion of six papers and much objective discussion.

The problems are likely to stay with us for a long time, and the Institute of Biology is to be congratulated on bringing together such useful and thought-provoking papers and participants.

P. J. OLNEY

British and European Birds in Colour, by Bertel Bruun and Arthur Singer. Hamlyn, 70s.

In this handsome volume Arthur Singer's illustrations of more than five hundred species, excellent in accuracy as aids to identification, appeal to the eye as being lively and attractive. They are well produced even though one or two of the smaller paintings seem to have suffered a little in the process of colour-printing, well arranged and convenient to consult. The textual notes by Bertel Bruun, a Danish ornithologist, are sound and compendious, and his brief introductions to each family are helpful descriptions of habits and habitats. Particularly interesting and helpful to an English reader is the account of the American sandpipers and other waders which are increasingly identified as visitors to our shores and are finely portrayed on pages 124 and 131.

The introduction (with a vegetational map) stigmatises the boundaries of Europe as being, from a zoogeographical angle, both 'artificial and dissatisfactory', with their eastern limits ill-defined. It is to be inferred from Bruce Campbell's foreword that the authors have resolved this undeniable difficulty by including all birds seen in the European part of the USSR though not recorded elsewhere in Europe. Whether this is more satisfactory than to take a line of longitude, it is hard to say. No doubt it is very difficult to combine brevity with precision in all respects, and the following remarks are not to be taken as expressing 'dissatisfaction' at the general way in which the condensed notes on species are framed. But even after study of the 148 useful distribution maps and close attention to qualifying broad indications of habitat, those who do not already know their European birds and where to look for them may be puzzled at the use of the word 'common' in relation to many species, for example, the red-necked grebe, the rough-legged and honey buzzards, marsh and Montagu's harriers, hobby ('quite common'), collared and red-breasted flycatchers (in open country), corncrake ('locally common in fields') and so on; in dealing with the passerines an effort is made to apply this vague term less loosely.

The distribution maps at the end are preceded by a list of almost eighty 'accidentals' for which there are fewer than five records in the present century. Of these nearly half have been recorded in Great Britain.

HURCOMB

The Kingfisher, by Rosemary Eastman. Collins, 30s.

The book of the film, *The Private Life of the Kingfisher*, by the author and her husband, which achieved an outstanding success, recalls Sielmann's film on woodpeckers and his subsequent book telling how it was made. This details the life cycle of the birds which were studied for the film, and it would be surprising if it did not add to our knowledge of their biology. Inevitably they were subjected to a good deal of disturbance including arrangements for filming them feeding their young in the nest-