

both the text and most of the plates of an excellent field guide before his premature death at the age of 39. The Pan-American Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation deserves all our thanks for ensuring that they were made available to us.

RICHARD FITTER

Birds of Moor and Mountain, by Donald Watson. Scottish Academic Press, £5.50.

To dismiss this handsome volume on outward appearance as yet another of those 'coffee-table' productions in which the text lends only token support to the illustrations would be to do it grave injustice. Factually it is a collection of some fifty short essays in which scholarly research and personal observation, skilfully and pleasingly blended, rank not a whit less in appeal than the generous complement of 38 plates, 25 in colour, and vignettes.

Donald Watson is a talented and highly regarded bird artist; he is moreover—as this work shows—not only a first-rate field naturalist and an acute observer but also a writer who can conjure, vividly and with brevity and a happy choice of phrase, an evocative word picture. Take, for example, his description of the whinchat, 'one moment almost impossibly upright and streamlined, the next wind-blown and crouching, then tall again with bill pointed downward as if the bird were contemplating its own toes'. The moorland, open country and wetlands of Galloway, the artist's home, provide the background for many of his pictures. Some of his most memorable paintings have been of water birds, perhaps especially of ducks and geese and notably when portrayed in a wintry setting—or is this just a personal predilection? Certainly, in this book I have found the pictures of the pair of goosanders (Plate 10) and of the Greenland white-fronts (Plate 5) quite the most satisfying.

W. J. EGGELING

The Asiatic Wild Horse, by Dr Erna Mohr, translated by D. M. Goodall. J. A. Allen, £2.50.

This excellent and invaluable small book surveys the whole field of facts about the Mongolian wild horse, which the specialists have now decided to be the best name for *Equus p. przewalskii*. Dr Mohr died in 1968 while the second German edition of *Das Urwildpferd* was being prepared, and the revision has been completed by Dr Jiri Volf of the Prague Zoo. These two, respectively founder and present keeper of the famous studbook that annually records the entire captive stock of these creatures, even now only so doubtfully surviving in the wild, have been in a better position than anyone to give us such an account—I almost wrote 'straight from the horse's mouth'.

The chapters cover the animal's possible relationships to the domestic horse and to primeval horses, its distribution—formerly and today—the importation of the original captures from which present zoo stocks are descended, the great deal that has become known of their appearance (and its many variations) and habits under captivity, and the little that is known of its biology in the wild. The main contentious questions, such as its affinities and best classification, are treated fairly, if not quite exhaustively, and a useful bibliography is provided, all in the tight compass of 124 pages, richly illustrated with 100 black and white photographs. The book is indispensable to those interested in the animal, and should also interest those whose concern with horses is more general.

The translation would, no doubt, not be so clearly informative if it had not been made by a translator with so patent a love of the subject and so

wide a general knowledge of horses, but the proof-reading and transliterations are less good than they should be. Use is made, also, of several expressions confusing in English: 'diluvial' (for 'the diluvial age') is obscure in this context, and the alteration of the book's title itself surely does not exactly render the author's intention.

IVOR MONTAGU

Deer of the World, by G. Kenneth Whitehead. Constable, £5.

The author has collected together a considerable amount of information on the Cervidae from old books, long out of print, and from more recent publications, and presented this very successfully within the space of less than 200 pages. Unfortunately, in the virtual absence of references within the text, the reader will have difficulty with certain topics in determining where the old ends and the new begins. Geographical ranges appear generally to follow earlier rather than present distributions. Current ranges of deer such as the Chinese sika, swamp deer, and the fallow deer in Turkey occupy only a fraction of the areas shown on the maps. In fact, the Turkish fallow deer presently occurs outside the range depicted. Geographical limits of certain South American deer, on the other hand, are not wide enough. Both the marsh and pampas deer range well within Bolivia, the former actually reaching southern Peru. There is an extremely interesting review of the economic uses of deer, but the chapter on antlers might have provided greater interest for the general reader if it had included some data from recent behavioural studies on the use and function of antlers, at the expense of material on natural and induced abnormalities in antler growth.

There are some excellent plates, including a unique photograph of the shou (now possibly extinct). If Riddel's painting of the hangul is a reliable indicator, however, the plates of artists' impressions of deer probably bear little relationship to the living animals. The bibliography is largely confined to books and the more substantial monographs on Cervidae; one or two publications within this category have, rather surprisingly, been omitted.

COLIN HOLLOWAY

The Leaping Hare, by George Ewart Evans and David Thomson. Faber, £3.50.

The title refers not only to the animal's physical leaping and springing but also to its association, in many languages and mythologies, with the springing up of life, the intuitive leaping mind and to spiritual and religious connotations.

Although sometimes gregarious, hares tend to be elusive, remote and solitary. They have been linked with mystery and magic, witchcraft and trickery, and, like the phoenix, have been a symbol of regeneration in a divine fire that cleanses and renews. In Chinese mythology 'the hare in the moon' was a resurrection symbol; in Indian legend it was a sacrificial animal, while it also figured in the folklore of the North American Indians and in Greek and Roman mythology. The authors, with their wide knowledge of rural beliefs of 50–100 years ago, have found many parallels in Britain. The reluctance of some countrymen to eat the hare, the taboo on its name among some Scottish fishermen, the hare-witch stories of Wales and Ireland, all support the belief that 'there is some sort of enchantment in the hare'.

The authors place great reliance on transcripts from tape-recordings and talks with countrymen, sometimes quoted to excess, but they have read widely and industriously and sought information and advice from many