

Rhinos Belong to Everybody, by **Bernhard Grzimek**. Collins, 63s.

If not a flood, there has been a steady flow of books on big game during recent years, and in particular on the great herds of the African plains. So much is published that is broadly similar that, enthusiast as I am, I find it difficult to struggle through most of it, and a cursory glance at the pictures is usually enough. Now at last here is a winner, a jewel in rather modest company, which is bound to absorb the most discerning reader, all the wildlife picture fans, lovers of travelogues and experts in conservation.

The pictures are outstanding. Some are breathtaking in their beauty, others dramatic or revealing as wildlife shots, and all of a special standard in terms of quality. If they could spring into movement as film sequences, I, as an amateur television producer, would water at the mouth. But this is not the main point to be made. The first judgment must be that this is not a volume dressed up like so many others to justify the reproduction of wonderful pictures. The text is as important and valuable as the pictures, full of stories and experiences and many facts hitherto unrecorded.

Bernhard Grzimek is not only a prince of conservationists, but a great "fixer" in the political field. He has a sort of magnetism for people of all races and colour, commanding trust and respect wherever he puts in an oar. Thus his latest book is of special interest because he brings the library up to date on the game park position since independence in Africa, and describes his extraordinary efforts at intervention for the sake of wildlife in the Congo. It would never entirely surprise me to find him one day mediating between governments and rebels anywhere! Grzimek has a magic of his own.

This is probably because of his honesty of outlook and purpose. His approach to conservation, with a keen sense of science and reality, is unsentimental and courageous. He is the antithesis of the cuddly furry brigade, which cashes in on public ignorance and commercialises sentiment. Thus everyone comes to believe what he says and to accept what he proposes. No man has more influence as a conservationist, nor can achieve more for wildlife anywhere, than Bernhard Grzimek on the African continent, and any student or enthusiast is going to be out of touch if he has not had the latest Grzimek dispatch on the general situation.

AUBREY BUXTON

Sauce for the Mongoose, by **Bruce Kinloch**. Harvill Press, 25s.

This is the fascinating story of a pet African banded mongoose, Pipa, meaning "a barrel" in the local vernacular, so-called from his pot-belly, the result of habitual disgusting gluttony. Pipa's astonishing escapades are of bewildering diversity, and one marvels that so much mischief can derive from so small a body. Irascible, often painfully reinforcing his many whims and demands with needle-sharp teeth, he was also affectionate and most lovable, "a character out of all proportion to his size." He was incredibly fearless, but instinctively aware of danger from above and the avian predator always made him panic.

An ardent exponent of the personality cult, he became so domineering, exacting and destructive that banishment from civilisation was his inevitable lot. Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, after a mate had been found for him, he returned to the wild, and, in the sage words of the author, "the mongoose clans of the Serengeti are going to learn a lot from him." His most impressive performance was when he decided to accompany an African Ranger patrol on a three-day, 45-mile tour, which for his little pattering feet ceaselessly