

[but not under about 14 though the series is intended for "12 upwards"] even remotely interested in nature, and being very useful for those planning careers as naturalists, biologists, ecologists or conservationists. In fact, for a child wanting vaguely to do "something scientific", but not quite sure what, this book might be just the one needed to persuade him to devote his life to some form of conservation work.

The book is well illustrated with photographs and Jane Burton's excellent drawings and diagrams.

M. D.

AT HOME IN THE ZOO. By GERALD ILES. W. H. ALLEN. 21s.

This book is an honest account of the trials and triumphs of zoo management, told by a man clearly devoted to his work. Many years of zoo experience are condensed in its 250 pages, and despite the anecdotal form of presentation, much can be learnt from it on the important subject of wild animal husbandry.

The zoos of the world are becoming increasingly important in the role of wild life conservation. Every expansion of man's civilized world endangers further wild species and heightens the duty of the zoos and their staffs as custodians of the vanishing faunas of the globe.

The special experience called upon inside zoological gardens to ensure the preservation of rare and valuable species by establishing successful conditions for survival and reproduction in captivity, is all too often passed from mouth to mouth and generation to generation, without written record. Gerald Iles' book is a valuable record of such experience that will not remain hidden in this way. From his mistakes and his successes, faithfully reported as they are, it is possible, in a few hours, to benefit from his lifetime of incessant pre-occupation with the many strange and unexpected problems of zoo life.

Particularly impressive, for anyone who considers zoo work as a soft life surrounded by beautiful creatures, is the four-page diary giving details of a typical day in the life of a zoo director. It begins at 7.30 a.m. and ends at 11.30 p.m., after passing through a maze of activities during which the zoo man becomes in quick succession a midwife, a publicist, a works supervisor, a dietician, a vet, an office executive, a public relations official, a zoologist, an animal dealer and a lecturer. Many readers will think that this typical day in the life of a zoo director is exaggerated and carefully selected. Any zoo man reading the book will know that it is not and, as with the rest of the book, will appreciate its accuracy.

That Mr. Iles has the conservation of wild life very much at the centre of his thoughts and actions is evident in the final chapter in which he makes a plea for an international charter in connection with the control of the standards of keeping captive animals. He believes that it is vital for some major organization to be formed to ensure that, whatever disasters may befall animals in the wild, they will be safe from extinction, in ideal conditions in the zoos of the world. As he says at the end of his book "A good zoo is a joy to all concerned—a bad zoo is one of the worst abominations in the world."

D. M.

PENGUIN ISLAND. By CHERRY KEARTON. Hutchinson. 15s.

Peter Scott, in his foreword to this book, says that he was given his first book by Cherry Kearton when he was a schoolboy. He already knew he would be a naturalist and the reinforcing influence of the book was significant. I also remember, as a child, very much enjoying Cherry Kearton's books. Sadly, I did not enjoy this one. I found its excessively anthropomorphic approach and its air of "talking down" very trying. This disappointed me as I have always admired Cherry Kearton and his work, and was pleased to see that a new edition of *Penguin Island* had been brought out.

I have not tried the book on children, but my feeling is that nowadays they demand either a story, or a sensible book, on scientific lines, giving them factual information. The book does, in fact, give the information—but well and truly cloaked in such sentences as, describing penguin courtship, "There must, of course, be an engagement—the most enjoyable period of a young girl's life," and, referring to the hen penguin during nest building, "His wife is a little indignant at that, 'Oh, John, can't you see that we aren't nearly ready yet?'"

The book contains thirteen chapters and, in my opinion, the last five or so are better than the first eight. Their approach is more straightforward and directly informative and much that is written about the penguins and their habitat is interesting. A child who really wanted to know about the blackfooted penguin and its ways might find the book rewarding, in the end, if he were willing to persevere and read it right through.

The line drawings by Mary Krishna, and of course Cherry Kearton's own photographs, are delightful—although the effect of the photographs is sometimes marred by silly captions.

M. D.