

introduction of exotic fauna and flora. The best example of the latter form of destructive agency was the introduction of the mongoose into Jamaica in 1872; although introduced for the express purpose of destroying rats in the cane fields this active little animal very soon eliminated various species of indigenous reptiles and ground-nesting birds.

A descriptive list of animals and birds which have become extinct or in danger of extinction is given. The attempts being made to save the flamingo flocks are of special interest particularly to anyone who has had the good fortune to have seen these unique birds in their habitat. The inclusion of information on seals, turtles, and whales helps to make the study complete.

A summary of the existing legislation and the steps being taken to establish conservation areas and initiate wild life protection in the different territories is given. One gathers, however, that although in many cases legislation exists, it is more honoured in the breach. Likewise even where reserves or sanctuaries exist it is often in name only.

In his final recommendations Dr. Westermann advocates the early establishment of conservation areas in all territories where they do not already exist; the enactment of adequate wild life protection laws and the adoption of an international Convention for the Americas and the Caribbean for better protection throughout the area.

This little book should certainly prove of interest to the steadily increasing number of naturalists and conservationists in the Caribbean.

E. W. MARCH.

Note.—A few copies of this book and of the previous book “Conservation in the Caribbean” vide *Oryx*, Vol. 2, No. 1, page 54, are available free of charge to members of the Society especially interested in this subject. Application may be made to the address given at the head of the article.—*Ed.*

DEER HUNTER. JOFF A. THOMSON. Wellington, New Zealand,
A. H. and A. W. Reed. 18s. 6d.

Prior to 1850 there were no deer in New Zealand. In that year some red deer from England were introduced to the Nelson district and since then they have so increased in numbers and range that government shooters alone have been slaughtering something like 40,000 deer per annum. “Thousands of men,”

writes Mr. Joff A. Thomson, have been employed at different times by the New Zealand government as deer cullers, and his book *Deer Hunter* describes the experiences of one of them.

“Open warfare on deer,” he writes, “was introduced twenty years ago, and since then probably a million deer or more have been shot by stalkers and government and commercial shooters. The number left is unknown, but there must be many of them. . . . If our campaign is to succeed, not even that number can be allowed to remain . . . we must exterminate every one.”

No one can question the fact that drastic steps have to be taken to combat this deer menace and there is no doubt that those entrusted with this policy must endure considerable hardships. Even so, it should be possible, in a civilized country like New Zealand, to find suitable men, armed with the modern precision rifle, who could do the job both efficiently and humanely. Yet, if all government cullers behave like Mr. Thomson and his colleagues, this book makes a truly shocking revelation.

One day, for instance, he and his companions open fire on a herd of wapiti, but after expending over a hundred rounds only six animals can be accounted for “although there was plenty of blood about from wounded beasts” but “after three miles or so the tracks gradually began to disappear into the bush”.

It is clear that little or no attempt was made to select any particular animal, for on seeing some beasts disappearing into the bush, the author says that “I gave them a few parting shots, hoping that I would hit some of them”. Once, on coming up with a wounded hind, his companion “grabbed a rifle by the muzzle and brought the butt down squarely” on to the skull of the unfortunate beast. “He sure dropped her in her tracks” he writes, “but the rifle butt parted from the barrel, with a few curses from both of us.” That the deer deserve any better and more humane treatment never seems to have occurred to the author, whose only regret at losing a wounded animal was a mercenary one, for, as he states, “each skin smelt of money.”

Occasionally enormous individual bags were obtained. One day, for instance, Mr. Thomson bagged thirty red deer and hoped that for once he had outnumbered his companion, “but the blighter returned an hour later with sixty.”

Enough has been said to reveal what a blood bath is described within the pages of *Deer Hunter*. In conclusion, the author expresses the hope that “intending sportsmen will find this book a guide to their shooting vacations”. One cannot imagine, however, that any true sportsmen will fail to put this book down

without a feeling of utter disgust. Men who behave in the presence of game in such a manner should not be permitted to carry firearms at all.

G. KENNETH WHITEHEAD.

BIRDS OF CEYLON, 2. By W. W. A. PHILLIPS. Ceylon Daily News Press : Lake House, Colombo. In full cloth, 9s. In thin board cover, 5s. 6d.

The first of this series, describing twenty familiar birds of the garden, was reviewed in *Oryx*, Vol. 1, No. 1. The present book gives twenty "Birds of our Swamps and Tanks" and the intention is to complete the series with three similar volumes.

Reliable information is given in an interesting and readable way, but even when the series is complete only 100 of the 386 birds in the Ceylon list will have been described. In a very small book, such as this is, there is really no space for two pages of quotations under "Opinions of Birds of Ceylon, 1", and the fourteen pages on bird photography, including six pages on "hides" with three full-page illustrations, might well have been devoted to the subject of the book, the birds of Ceylon. The illustrations show the birds well enough but would have done so equally well at half their present scale, again leaving room for birds.

The series is intended for beginners and a beginner needs to feel that his book will contain every bird that he is at all likely to meet. These are nice little books and have considerable merit, but I wish they could have included more birds.

C. I. B.