

read more about 'national taxes for international purposes', 'global taxes', 'subsidy payments for tropical-forest countries', and the like. We know the ark is sinking, but we want to know how best to keep it floating a little longer. Norman Myers is a good adviser but seems exhausted at this stage of his 284-page book and is at his peak when describing the problems.

On style he is relentless, pouring out facts, having little change in pace, and using long words rather than the short ones (which Churchill said were better, the shortest being best of all). However the facts are here for us, most breathlessly. It is good to have such a compendium, both of information and of argument, all packaged for our use.

ANTHONY SMITH

**The Wandering Gorillas, by Alan Goodall. Collins, £6.50.**

Well-written, entertaining, even at times exciting, this book is a good buy for anyone who wants to know about the frustrations and joys of studying wildlife in Africa. Its difference from other such accounts is that those who study gorillas do so on foot, not from a Land Rover. A gorilla-watcher meets the animals on their terms, not his, and this book portrays well the awe and utter delight that a person feels as, alone and unarmed, he comes finally to be accepted by the totally wild gorillas that he is studying.

You will not, however, find much about gorilla social behaviour here – about the close bonds between the leading male and his females, the gentleness with which older youngsters play with small infants, or about the strong ties between a gorilla mother and her offspring, even into adulthood of the offspring. Only the last two of the book's 15 chapters are devoted to telling us about the gorillas themselves, as opposed to the author's experiences during his two years with them. These two chapters give an account of the gorillas' feeding and ranging behaviour – the author's particular subjects of study – of their future, and of what we should do to conserve them and their ever-dwindling forest habitat.

In countries like Rwanda, where population pressures are so great and natural resources so scarce, the Government has far more to worry about than the fate of a few gorillas. If these magnificent animals and the forests in which they live are to be saved, international help is needed. I have only one major criticism of the book and that is that the publishers have gratuitously resurrected the old 19th century Du Chaillu image of the vicious gorilla. The front-cover picture and three of the book's six colour plates depict charging, screaming gorillas, mouth open and canines bared. The author, with his obvious love of the animals, should not have permitted this blatant sensationalism.

A. H. HARCOURT

**The Breakdown and Restoration of Ecosystems, edited by M.W. Holdgate and M.J. Woodman. Plenum Press, \$36.**

This is the third volume to be published in a series of conference reports on ecological topics under the rather surprising umbrella of NATO. This conference was held in Reykjavik in 1976, when it was known as the Conference on the Rehabilitation of Severely Damaged Land and Freshwater Ecosystems in Temperate Zones; the original title, if cumbersome, is somewhat more accurate. The volume contains 24 papers and various introductions, conclusions, and verbatim discussions, which would have benefited from more active editing. In particular the discussions show a disconcerting degree of precognition amongst the participants: in discussing both Parkinson's and Bradshaw's papers, speakers refer to subsequent papers.

The volume opens with a section on 'Basic Ecological Principles', which serves to demonstrate how far ecology is from understanding the operation of whole ecosystems, despite recent advances. The modern approach to single-species population dynamics is well summarised by R.M. May, but a very long paper by G.M. Van Dyne and others, on models for grazed ecosystem management, clearly provoked considerable discussion at the meeting, on the question of both cost and general applicability. J.N. Jeffers, in a