

current practices of the IWC. The authors claim that all quotas are now set 'on a scientific basis' but, in fact, few are.

There is little about the whales themselves except where they were found and how they subsequently 'disappeared'. A depressingly repetitive chronicle is given of the near extermination of one local population after another, of each species, in nearly every corner of the planet. But for information about the evolution of the technology of whaling and of processing carcasses this book is practically unique and extraordinarily informative. If the information it contains about changes in and increases in efficiency of hunting and catching methods had been available in translation earlier, some of the errors in interpretation of whale abundance as 'catch per unit effort' made by IWC scientists might have been avoided.

Of topical interest is a fascinating account of the relation between whaling and problems of sovereignty in the Antarctic. On this, and on other topics of wider interest than whaling, the book sheds much light. It is to be commended highly – to professionals concerned with whales and whaling, to those interested in 'saving' whales and Antarctica, and to those many others who may be ready to be fascinated by this study, in depth, of what is, politically speaking, one of the facets of a colonial expansion, not to dark continents but to the shores of remote seas. In that era the seamen had, the authors tell us, 'their own special geographical distinctions – beyond forty (i.e. south of 40°S) no law, beyond fifty no God'.

SIDNEY HOLT

The Wildlife of Arabia, introduction by **Professor W. Büttiker**. Stacey International, £12.95.

A traveller flying over Arabia could be forgiven for thinking that the vast areas of forbidding terrain below were a lunar landscape, not part of Earth. Naturalists who have studied Arabia's wildlife, as Sir Peter Scott observes in his foreword, are astounded by its diversity of species. Each returns, as Sir Peter recalls, 'with a host of memorable wildlife experiences'. The explanation for this, as explained by Professor Büttiker in his introduction, lies partly in Arabia's unique zoogeographical position. It forms a bridge between two great land masses, Africa and Eurasia, permitting faunal migrations. The desert, surely the harshest environment on earth, has produced its own amazing adaptations of form and function – a veritable crucible of natural selection.

Although technical works exist for specialists, there has been a notable lack of literature for amateur enthusiasts. This book fulfils this requirement admirably. Compiled by an impressive team of acknowledged experts, it is illustrated lavishly with superb colour photographs. The text is readable and informative, with very few technical errors. It will stimulate interest in the wildlife of Arabia and be treasured on the bookshelves of amateurs and specialists alike. The contributors and publishers deserve our congratulations.

DAVID L. HARRISON

Galapagos: Islands Lost in Time, by **Tui de Roy Moore**. George Allen & Unwin, £15.

Tui de Roy, now Mrs Moore, arrived in the Galapagos as a baby and sees the islands as a native, not as a tourist. Her book is the story of a child growing up in the wilderness and learning about nature by direct experience. Later, as she