

came up with an adult rhino and a young one – this was in 1963 – and got the photograph of which a black and white version appears on plate 3 opposite page 340. The photographs are accompanied by a ‘running commentary’ describing the journeys, and the book concludes with useful accounts, by four German scientists, of the species photographed; these are occasionally rather out of date in the conservation aspects, for events move fast, and the book was first published in German in 1966.

Where one would like to see this book is not so much on the coffee tables of the four-guinea book buyers but in the school libraries and on teachers’ desks. The combination of travel story, exciting photographs and species description should be many a teachers’ answer to prayer.

MAISIE FITTER

Time is Short and the Water Rises, by John Walsh with Robert Gannon. Nelson, 42s.

ISPA, the International Society for the Protection of Animals, was brought into being in 1959 in the USA. Its largest single undertaking is the subject of this book, Operation Gwamba: ‘the rescue of 10,000 animals from certain death in a South American rain forest’, described also as ‘the largest and, probably, the most dangerous animal rescue project ever attempted’.

The story is comparable to that of Operation Noah. In this case the dam, the Afobaka, is in Surinam (formerly Dutch Guiana). The artificial lake, officially known as the ‘Prof Dr Ir. W. J. van Blommenstein Meer’ (no doubt known as ‘Blommers’ for short) covers either ‘about 870 sq miles’ (page 19) or ‘650 sq miles’ (page 42). In 18 months, 23-year-old John Walsh and his team trapped, netted, dug out or stunned with tranquillisers 9737 animals. The inventory in an appendix shows that the large majority were mammals including 2104 three-fingered sloths, and 1051 nine-banded armadillos. Dr Jan Michels, secretary of the Surinam SPCA, himself expresses the two viewpoints about this sort of rescue: ‘. . . if you look at it purely from a dispassionate view point it makes no scientific sense to save the animals’; but ‘. . . we cannot passively see the drowning of thousands of animals without taking any action’. This point was discussed, in reference to the Lake Magadi flamingo chicks, by John Pearson and Peter Scott in *ORYX*, April 1965.

The story is told in popular language, and should have a good propagandist effect, and the 41 photographs, 19 in colour, are good. To anyone who knows about animals it is rather long-winded and lacking in meat. But then it wasn’t written as a sermon for the converted.

JEFFERY BOSWALL

The Whooping Crane, by Faith McNulty. Longmans, 30s.

In 1965 whooping cranes numbered only 44, but even that was an improvement on 29 in 1937. This story of the efforts of the National Audubon Society and the US Government, to stop the decline and increase the number of birds is almost a case-history of all the difficulties involved in trying to save a vanishing species, and they seldom all occur in one instance. The habitat necessary for the crane, shallow water and marsh vegetation, is almost wholly incompatible with human occupation. Even before the appearance of the white man this sort of country was shrinking before the advancing forests and drying up owing to the lowering of the water table. Deliberate destruction of the birds was almost as deadly as the spread of agriculture. When public opinion became convinced that the whooping crane must be saved, disagreement between animal societies, lack of