these reasons, Richardson's book can be recommended to New Zealand foresters—and indeed to all whose calling or interests are based on the soil—as a salutary exercise in learning how almost one-quarter of the world's people make do with about one-fourteenth of the world's total land area.

As all New Zealand foresters know, Dr Richardson is an extremely discerning observer and a forthright commentator; as they will expect, he has recorded his impressions on China in eminently readable and lucid terms.

D.K.


This is a very readable account of the deer situation in England and Scotland by an enthusiastic and experienced observer. The introductory treatment is pre-historical and historical. It is surprising to read that, in addition to red and roe deer, reindeer survived the last ice encroachment and, indeed, were hunted in Scotland as late as the 12th century. Following the Norman Conquest, forest law was supremely important and enforced savagely by the Crown, resulting in conservation of deer. At the time of Magna Carta, the bulk of British forests were game reserves, but 300 years after, owing to the whittling away of forest law, the herds had become so vulnerable that only a struggling remnant survived. Much later, deerstalking as it is known today became popular, and this led to protection of the herds and a vast increase in the number of deer in the Highlands. It will not cause the New Zealand conservationist much surprise to read: "Unfortunately the herds soon became too large, and the damage which sheep had done to the woods which provided winter shelter was continued by deer."

But what is surprising to read is that there are now more deer in Britain than at any time in the last 400 years, and that much of the increase has been recent. The simple explanation is that during the last 40 years the afforestation drive by the Forestry Commission has resulted in a spectacularly greater area of suitable deer habitat. And a previously used method of driving, in an attempt to control the numbers, has resulted in vastly widened distribution. At present, there are six species with substantial feral range. Fallow deer are found in most English counties, roe deer mainly in Scotland and northern England, red deer in northern Scotland; sika and the two small species, muntjac and Chinese water deer, have smaller scattered ranges.

The author's attitude is commendably balanced. He acknowledges freely that deer, particularly red, roe and fallow deer, present substantial problems to farming and forestry and emphasizes the necessity for control. On the other hand, he stresses the aesthetic and game values of deer and the financial gain to be obtained from letting shooting rights. Recently the attitude of the Forestry Commission has mellowed and in 1959 their policy stated that "complete extermination is neither desirable nor practicable". A Red Deer Commission has been set up which, although primarily
concerned with conservation, has wide powers to enforce the control and even extermination of red deer in areas where they are doing damage to farming or forestry. Such strong discretionary provisions are fundamentally similar to those of our own Noxious Animals Act. But the Deer Act of 1963 provides for closed seasons and prohibits traps, snares and poisons. This is more in line with the aspirations of our Deerstalkers' Association.

A most interesting development is the setting up of local Deer Control Societies which are voluntary co-operative arrangements between, presumably, landowners, stalkers and deer protagonists in general. Detail is provided about the author's Cranborne Chase Deer Control Section. The aim is to pool information and resources over a deer range, parts of which are owned by many interests. Each year a census is made over the 5,000 acres and the required number of culls calculated for each sector. The appealing theme is the old soothing syrup about healthy animals in healthy forests. No detail is given of how accurate censuses are made nor of how safe carrying capacities are calculated, but, no doubt with such small areas involved, trial and experience will enable a reasonably satisfactory balance in the long run.

This gentlemanly handling of the deer problem may well suit the topographic, social and economic conditions prevailing in Britain. There, unlike New Zealand, the main problem is not a herculean task of control in rugged mountain lands to avert disasters on the flood plains below, but rather the problem of preserving the deer for sportsmen and nature lovers. As the author admits, "If there were no hunting, there would be no deer." If a determined effort had to be made to destroy deer, using systematic hunting and poisoning as have been developed in this country, deer would almost certainly soon be reduced to an insignificant remnant. British foresters are fortunate in that they need not insist on the rigorous methods which we have to use in New Zealand. Probably, in the long run, their "kid glove" and our "strong arm" methods will end in the same result — control to the level compatible with correct land use. The difference in approach to control is dictated by the marked differences in topography and population.

P.J.McK.


This is the fifth book in the Modern Biology Series, intended to provide background reading for sixth form and early university studies. It is pleasing that a book which emphasizes the usefulness of woodlands and the correctness of wise use in perpetuity, should have appeared so soon in a series devoted to biological studies.

Professor Ovington, now Professor of Forestry in the Australian National University, formerly Senior Principal Scientific Officer at Monks Wood Experimental Station of the U.K. Nature Conservancy, briefly surveys man's generally thoughtless destructive past use of woodlands and gives an account of present usage, suggesting finally that the wheel may have come full circle and