LITERATURE

This column will give information about new literature, publications, books, etc. Tips concerning new literature are welcome, and should be sent to Ed Prüst, Voorstraat 61, 3512 AK Utrecht, The Netherlands.

BOOKREVIEW by K.R.G. WELCH

A comparative study of the herpetological fauna of the former West Cameroon/Africa with a classification and synopsis of 95 different snakes and descriptions of some new subspecies; Stucki-Stirn, Martin C. Snake report 721 (1979), Herpeto-Verlag, Switzerland, 650 pp.

The size of this book is only matched by disappointment after reading through its pages. Despite acknowledgements 'for the correction of the manuscripts' Cameroon is spelt Comeroon on the cover and the text is a mixture of english and american. The text itself contains very little information though localities will be of some use to herpetologists visiting Cameroon.

As it is the book should be considered from three view points:

1. Scientific: In the introduction the author says "Even though this report is written from a strict scientific point of view", no original authors and year of description are listed with the individual taxa. Xenurophis is used for Grayia caesar - why? Natrix is used instead of Afronatrix (Rossman and Eberle, 1977, Herpetologica 33: 34-43) - why? The descriptions of new subspecies, with no type - localities or type specimens is totally unacceptable and unscientific. The interesting problem of Bothrophthalmus

lineatus (Appendix IV) was surely worth further discussion and study.

2. Photos and drawings: Without doubt the most valuable part of the book, which includes photos of species rarely seen elsewhere. Even here I wonder why the photo of Pseudohaje goldi on page 509 is again shown on page 512.

3. General presentation: There is a lot of wasted (blank) paper in the book and one can easily believe that with more thought and a scientific approach a more compact and useful book would have been presented.

Two points stick in my memory which are in clined to cloud my overall picture: one, the inclusion of photos of the skinned heads of Bitis nasicornus (p. 105) and black and white cobra (p. 106) both of which must have been a disappointment to the photographer and should not have been incuded; two, a picture to illustrate cannibalism shows a specimen of Mehelya poensis swallowing a Lycophidium irroratum - to all non-english readers this is not cannibalism.