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Prejudices get another kicking when we look at Wayland's Know Your Pet series. Statements like 'editorial planning by Jollands Editions' on the back of the title page breed suspicion right away. Will this be a series planned, designed and advised upon by a dozen or more consultants, but actually written by nobody?

Answer - no. Jollands have done an unobtrusive job and these are the Sproules' books. Written for the serious pet owner of 8-14, these two latest additions to the series provide a fine introduction, not only to the techniques of looking after their subjects, but to the responsibilities as well. The importance of routine - at least as important to the pet as to the owner - and of hygiene are very sensibly emphasised. For example, in **Mice and Rats** we find: 'If you have a cold or 'flu you should keep away from your pets until you get better . . . Ask a member of your family to look after them.' And then, wonderfully, **Guinea Pigs** actually suggests putting the old bedding and droppings on the compost-heap (where it does a great Job) rather than merely 'discarding it' like most books do - if they even get that far.

The texts are skilfully simple and good for family sharing. 'Hard' words are boldly printed and explained in a glossary (where 'compost' comes up as 'dead vegetable matter left to rot', which is only the half of it!). Indexing is good, bibliographies are helpfully selective, and a thoroughly responsible approach, which puts the pets' welfare first, makes these extremely recommendable to the majority of pet-keeping families. At about a guinea over the price of one guinea pig, the price is on the high side, but the benefit and value are much greater.

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