

Book reviews

My only criticisms of this well-documented book are reserved for the publishers for producing such a lurid and inappropriate dust-jacket, for the poor quality of some of the monochrome illustrations, and for placing such a high price (even in this inflationary age) on a book of 224 pages.

The highest compliment I can pay Dr King is to say that I wish her thought-provoking book had been published in time for me to have read it before completing my own *Naturalized Mammals of the World*.

Christopher Lever

Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance

Stephen Herrero

Winchester Press, New Jersey, 1985, 287 pp, \$14.95

When bears come close to humans, potentially harmful interactions become a problem—for the bears as much as for people. Particularly in certain American national parks, the 'bear problem' became acute during the 1970s, with large numbers of visitors regularly coming into bear country and many bears being positively attracted to key areas such as campsites and hiking trails. The bears began raiding camps and ripping open cars to get at food inside. There were also some gruesome and highly publicized human fatalities, often resulting from people startling bears (especially females with cubs) or crowding too close to them in order to feed or photograph them. Herrero describes his research into this developing problem of wildlife management and proposes some possible solutions. Keeping campsites scrupulously clean and proper disposal of refuse are obvious ways of not encouraging bears to become campsite scroungers, and perhaps should be mandatory anyway. Killing or deporting ursine camp followers is less desirable, especially in a national park. Stiff penalties for feeding bears by the roadside might help too—if people were persuaded to stop. However, seeing bears is one of the pleasures of visiting a national park; the difficulty is to control the behaviour of people towards them. One of Herrero's illustrations shows the hand-feeding of a wild bear, and I have seen holidaymakers posing their children beside a wild bison for a good family snapshot, and children playing beside a wild alligator. The so-called 'bear

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problem' is actually a people problem too. Herrero discusses both aspects and also shows how very different the grizzly and black bear are in their behaviour towards humans. This leads him to propose different strategies for us to follow if attacked. In one case you must be totally passive and play dead, in the other you should fight back: a tricky decision to make in the 1.5 seconds before a charging bear reaches you!

This is an interesting book, perhaps an important one for those who regularly hike and camp in North America. For a little while I was put off from doing either. Bear attacks are bad news, literally, and can generate disproportionate hysteria, but a sense of proportion should be retained; the chances of being killed by a bear, even in the most likely places, are less than one in a million. Being struck by lightning is far more likely. History shows that we can easily solve the bear problem by exterminating bears; peacefully coexisting with them is more difficult, but perhaps more appropriate, especially in national parks.

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Galapagos: A Natural History Guide

M.H. Jackson

University of Calgary Press, 1985, XIII+283 pp, US \$17.50 (outside Canada) + \$3.00 postage, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 1N4

Also available from Bradt Publications, 41 Norcroft Road, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks SL9 0LA, UK, £14.95

Despite the recent flood of Galapagos books, this latest one covers a somewhat different field from the rest and so meets a somewhat different need. It is neither a slim pocket guide such as M.P. Harris's *Field Guide to the Birds of the Galapagos*, nor yet an authoritative compilation of scientific information written by experts on their specialist subjects, such as *Galapagos* in the Pergamon Press's *Key Environment* series. Mr Jackson's guide book falls somewhere between the two, and very properly draws freely on these and other sources. It is a substantial soft-backed volume dealing with the historical background, the environmental setting, conservation problems and information for visitors, as well as eight substantial chapters on the various divisions of wildlife (plants, reptiles, seabirds etc.). There is

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