

Book reviews

excellent series and give us other, equally comprehensive, guides to the status and conservation of other groups of birds, and that the Specialist Groups of the IUCN Species Survival Commission will follow suit with plants and the rest of the animals. We must not get the idea that species are only important when they actually get into a Red Data Book.

Richard Fitter

The Fragmented Forest: Island Biogeography Theory and the Preservation of Biotic Diversity

Larry D. Harris

University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1984, PB £10.95, HB £22.95

As the world's natural forests dwindle under modern land-use, so the remaining 'islands' become more important as representatives of mature ecosystems. Sound management is therefore vital, and Larry Harris builds essentially on two themes to advocate his approach. First, that for forest islands to function independently of their surroundings, 'their size might need to be so large that their conservation would be outside the realm of existing conditions or current political and economic restraints', and second, that since forest conservation is aimed primarily at the future, 'we must follow procedures that will ensure the sustained development of replacement stands'.

In a very timely and cogent work, Harris draws together scientific information about the fir forests of the Cascade mountains in Washington and Oregon, and uses it to evaluate the utility of island biogeography theory as a guide to forest management. He opens with a detailed description of the forest community, and draws the reader into a careful evaluation of alternative management approaches, looking at such factors as island area requirements for specified flora and fauna, island size versus island number, and inter-island distance. In the final section of the book, he gives his prescription: the Archipelago Approach, involving long-rotation islands. These are permanently undisturbed areas, surrounded by buffers of managed forest that are cut sequentially in cake-slices to maximize the average age difference between the sections. He also elaborates

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upon the uses of riparian strips as corridors for genetic flow between stands.

For me, a lot of the importance of *The Fragmented Forest* lies in its heuristic value. Much more than in North America, the forests of the developing world are being exploited for short-term profits, and there is powerful ammunition in this book for those whose role it is to persuade governments to aim natural community management at perpetual benefits. It should be on every conservation biologist's bookshelf.

Michael Kavanagh, *World Wildlife Fund—Malaysia*

Threatened Birds of Africa and Related Islands

The ICBP/IUCN Red Data Book, Part 1

N.J. Collar and S.N. Stuart

International Council for Bird Preservation, 1985, £24.00, including postage, from ICBP, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, CB3 0DL, UK

It would be very easy to write several pages of praise for the new bird *Red Data Book* (RDB) and I have absolutely no doubt that many such reviews will appear. However, a function of a review is also to bring out any points for discussion, even if there are no criticisms. Firstly, I must emphasize that this is essential reference for even the smallest library and I have nothing but unqualified praise for the authors.

The introduction claims that ICBP was the first (1922) 'global organization to be set up for wildlife conservation'. This is a quibbling point for members of the FFPS, since we always claim to be the first (1903) international wildlife conservation society—the British Empire in those days covered more countries than did ICBP. More seriously though, there are a number of changes in the presentation of the RDB which are noteworthy. Subspecies have been excluded, and while I believe this to be a fully justified decision on taxonomic grounds, it does mean that a number of interesting populations have probably been excluded.

A problem with all the IUCN (and ICBP) *Red Data Books* is inconsistent use of categories for degrees of threat. To start with, in this present volume, it is difficult to find the definitions, and a

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more clearly laid out set of definitions would have been a considerable help. Having found them, there is a new category 'of special concern', for which there is no really satisfactory definition—however, my personal view is that it would be far better for all RDBs to abandon categories—some of which appear to be tautological anyway.

Another comment concerns maps; although the descriptions of range are a real *tour-de-force*, a map certainly concentrates the mind. For my money (and I am sure that the reason for the lack of maps is a lack of money), I would have (sadly) foregone Norman Arlott's excellent colour plates—there are, after all, plenty of pictures of pink pigeons—for a distribution of each species.

Of all RDBs so far published, this is certainly the most detailed and comprehensive. This is partly explained by the fact that there are a lot of data available for birds, but is also a reflection on the extent of the research and enthusiasm of the compilers. I have already purchased my own personal copy (so the review copy will be on the FFPS shelves) and I would urge all dedicated (and even dilettanté) conservationists to buy one. Congratulations ICBP!

John A. Burton

A Century of Natural History

Edited by J.C. Daniel

Bombay Natural History Society, Hornbill House, Shahid Bhagat, Singh Road, Bombay 400023, India, 1983, Rs 150. plus Rs 55 surface mail postage.

This book is a compilation to commemorate the centenary of the Bombay Natural History Society. It consists of selected articles from that Society's famous journal, with an Authors' Index and a Subject Index. The articles cover a variety of subjects: mammals to marine shells, botany, sport and Indian history.

The book is a magnificent volume for fireside reading by those of us who knew India between the two Great Wars, for it gives enthralling (and unintended) glimpses into life in India under the Raj that are not obtainable anywhere else. I found the following articles especially interesting: The Mogul Emperors of India as Naturalists and Sportsmen, by Salim Ali; The Climate of India by S.K. Banerji; and Vanishing and Extinct Birds of India by S. Dillon Ripley.

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It is strange that reptiles have such a short section—only 10 pages. The common cobra is not even mentioned.

The book must be handled carefully, for the cover is not 'man enough' for its job.

Strongly recommended.

C.L. Boyle, former Secretary to the FFPS and Editor of *Oryx*

The 1983 International Zoo Yearbook

Edited by P.J.S. Olney

Zoological Society of London, 1984, HB £26.50, PB £19.50

After 23 years of publishing to ever increasing standards of excellence, it is difficult to write anything original about the *International Zoo Yearbook*. Volume 23 is primarily devoted to birds of prey, with the main emphasis on captive-breeding and its role in conservation. The standard of papers is high, and the wide range of subject matter will interest the field ornithologist as well as the zoo specialist.

As usual, there is a section on New Developments in the Zoo World. Papers include several first breedings, as well as more general husbandry topics. Finally, there is the section that most readers have come to depend on: the Reference Section listing species bred in captivity, the Census of Rare and Endangered species held in the world's zoos, and the list of studbooks.

John A. Burton

A Dictionary of Birds

Edited by B. Campbell and E. Lack

T. and A.D. Poyser (and Buteo in US) 1985, £39.00

This is a complete revision of Landsborough Thomson's long out-of-print *New Dictionary of Birds*. It is a distillation of erudition from over 280 specialists covering all fields of bird biology. The alphabetically arranged entries range from brief definitions to essays of several thousand words on major topics. Even if the volume is too expensive for many private bookshelves (although good value for over one million words), it should be in all libraries as a primary source of reference.

Robert Burton, Naturalist and Author