

Published on behalf of IUCN and the Conservation Foundation, it is to be hoped that they will follow the pointers set out by this book and sponsor further such ventures until every developer is apprised of the need for ecological awareness and every conservationist of economic constraints.

ALASTAIR FITTER

The Arena of Life: the Dynamics of Ecology, by Lorus and Margery Milne. Allen & Unwin, £5.25.

So many books with similar titles to this one have turned out to be vague and imprecise accounts of some aspect of animal life or human destiny, that one approaches another with some misgivings. However, it soon becomes clear that this one is emphatically not in this category. Fifty years ago, when titles indicated with stark reality what a book was all about, it might have been called 'The Plain Man's Guide to Ecology', and it will be hard to better it in this role.

The book is, of course, of American origin and was planned, prepared and produced by Chanticleer Press, New York, who are to be congratulated on such a splendidly produced work. The authors, a man and wife team of biologists who have twenty-eight books already to their credit, deserve no less praise for their part. Skillfully compressing the essentials of a dozen disciplines, ranging from climatology to biogeography, they give first a concise, up-to-date but understandable account of the principles of ecology. The theory is applied to practical examples from today's environmental problems, especially in making clear that the time factors in natural cycles no longer permit us to dump more wastes into the environment than they can accommodate. Important chapters on the population explosion and on ecological awareness bring the chapters into focus for all of us.

To readers of this journal the second half of the book, dealing with the ecological communities of the seas, fresh waters, soil, forests, grasslands, deserts and polar regions, will probably be the most interesting. Drawing on their wide experience of six continents, the authors give fascinating and up-to-date information on the problems facing each ecosystem in the circumstances of the modern world.

The illustrations are outstanding, well selected for the topics they enlighten and excellently reproduced. At the end of the book is a summary of modern zoological classification, a good glossary and a comprehensive bibliography. It is a book that one would like to see in every school library as well as on the table of everyone who feels that what is happening in the natural world is of no concern to him or her.

JOHN CLEGG

Conservation, edited by A. B. Costin and H. J. Frith. Penguin, A\$2.20.

Two hundred years after Cook's discovery, Australia still fascinates the observer and especially the biologist. But Australia is not an outdoor museum, it has a thrusting, exuberant, dynamic economy, hell-bent to exploit all available resources. Fortunately, throughout the world, there is an increasing realisation of the fragility of our environment, despite its resilience, and the need to stabilise the population, re-cycle materials and ensure that all economies have an ecologically sound basis. As the editors plead, the environment should not be a by-product of our business activities, but these should be consciously adjusted to provide the type of living conditions we desire. It is reassuring that most States and the Commonwealth have taken, or are considering, action against pollution, but a co-ordinated approach to resource use is badly needed. Under Australian