

Book reviews

Environmental Policies: An International Review

Edited by Chris Park

Croom Helm, Beckenham, Kent, 1985, £22.50

It may show my lack of sophistication, but books that use words like 'ecocentrism' and 'technocentrism' really drive me up the wall. When I read a sentence like 'the technocentric continuum described by O'Riordan emerged in the 1980s, with the political consensus co-opting environmentalism so that they can retain control over the transition from cornucopianism to accommodation, thereby repelling any attempts at any more radical solutions to the growth-environmental damage-social justice drama', I want to telephone the editor of 'Pseud Corner' in *Private Eye*. *Environmental Policies: An International Review* is not totally dominated by such unintelligible (at least to me) jargon, but there is a fair smattering.

In substance, the book consists of an introductory chapter, seven chapters on environmental policies in the United States, Canada, EEC, United Kingdom, Australia, India and Japan (one chapter on each), and a final chapter entitled 'Towards a Global Environmental Strategy'. Provided one can wade through the jargon, the seven middle chapters do provide a useful overview of environmental policies in the countries concerned. Because of the enormity of the subject area and the limitations of space (the chapters are about 30 pages in length), the treatment of specific problems is inevitably rather superficial. Nevertheless, the reader is given some insight into the historical context from which environmental policies have developed, and a brief, if rather generalized, description of the particular problems facing each chosen region and the policy framework within which attempts to solve these problems are structured.

The chapter on India is particularly interesting because it is the only developing country covered by the book, and a recognition of the importance of environmental protection is much more entrenched in the traditional Indian view of life than in the West. A review of environmental policies in one or two other developing countries with different cultures would have added greatly to the value of the book. *Environmental Policies* will be 198

useful to those in need of introductory reading on the countries covered, but they will need to look elsewhere for a really detailed analysis.

Simon Lyster, Honorary Secretary of the Falklands Islands Foundation and author of International Wildlife Law

Immigrant Killers: Introduced Predators and the Conservation of Birds in New Zealand

Carolyn King

Oxford University Press, 1984, 224 pp, £29.50

Dr Carolyn King's fascinating and extremely readable book (which, incidentally, carries the recommendation of the ICBP and WWF) covers a much wider field than the title seems to suggest, since it not only traces the introduction and impact of predators (including man) to New Zealand, but also describes the indigenous fauna before their arrival, and explains why the various endemic birds—which had hitherto evolved in a predator-free environment—were defenceless against these exotic intruders. There is also a chapter describing the effect of introduced predators on the avifauna of Lord Howe Island, Hawaii, Britain and Australia.

Since the arrival in New Zealand of Polynesian colonists (who brought with them kuri dogs and kiore rats) some 1200 years ago, and of European settlers (who initially imported cats, dogs, rats and domestic stock, and subsequently mustelids and a variety of grazing and browsing herbivores) since 1769, some 55 species and subspecies of native birds have disappeared from the two main islands.

Contrary to popular belief, however, Dr King argues persuasively that the main reason for the extinction of birds in New Zealand has not been simple predation by such carnivores as cats and stoats nor by rodents such as rats, but rather a combination of the reduction (by some 70 per cent) of the total area of native forest; the dissection (by man) and degradation (by introduced browsing mammals such as deer and possums) of the remaining forest; and the introduction of predators—including man, first as hunter for food, then as museum collector, and latterly as habitat despoiler. 'There is no doubt,' Dr King concludes, 'that the number one immigrant killer of modern times is man himself.'

Oryx Vol 20 No 3, July 1986