

Book reviews

Animal Behaviour: an Evolutionary Approach, 3rd edition

John Alcock

Sinauer Associates, Massachusetts,
1984, £19·80

Animals do an astonishing variety of things, and this is precisely why we find them so utterly fascinating. A measure of this diversity is revealed in John Alcock's book. Dipping into it one can find reference to caravanning of baby European shrews, young cichlids which browse on their mother's skin, flies which use their penises to remove rivals' sperm from their mates, frog-eating bats, a bell bird which utters its deafening chimes straight into the ear of its hen, and head hunting humans. But it is this phenomenal range of activity spread across the whole of the animal kingdom that makes animal behaviour such a bewildering subject. Furthermore, the mountains of contemporary literature are not easily scaled by those wishing to have an overview.

This, the third, and virtually rewritten edition of *Animal Behaviour* attempts very successfully to distil the discoveries of the last half-century into a coherent overview of why living creatures behave as they do. It is part of Professor Alcock's credo that evolutionary theory provides the key for understanding the great enterprises of animal activity. He employs a scheme that recognises the fundamental division between the stimuli that spur animals into action, and the factors that govern the survival of behaviour from one generation to another.

There are 15 chapters, covering among other topics, behaviour and genetics, development, ecology, the origins of behaviour, the roles of male competition and female choice in reproductive behaviour, and a concluding one about human behaviour, which might be thought by some to be a little cursory.

It is clear that John Alcock is no dry academic, but one whose enjoyment of animal behaviour is clearly demonstrated in the presentation of the text. Although a book for serious students of the subject, this edition is attractively packaged, with well chosen illustrations, and furthermore, is eminently readable.

Book reviews

I recommend it for those who wish for an up-to-date synthesis of the science of animal behaviour.

John Sparks

*BBC Natural History Unit,
Bristol*

EEC Environmental Policy and Britain. An Essay and Handbook

Nigel Haigh

Environmental Data Services Ltd,
40 Bowling Green Lane, London EC1R
0NE, 1984, £12·95

Nigel Haigh's book is a splendid essay on the EEC Environmental Policy, giving a balanced view of its effects together with a comprehensive handbook on the Directives, Regulations and Decisions that form part of the community policy and have an effect on Britain.

The essay deals with Britain's environmental policy and the EEC; the scope of the National and Community policy; the methods that are used for pollution control and, finally, the objectives of River Quality Policy. The essay provides a very balanced look at the short- and long-term effects of the EEC environmental regulations on Britain and our response to them.

The Handbook, the main thrust of the book, is a comprehensive account of water, waste, air chemicals, the Wildlife and Countryside Act and noise pollution, in the environment. Each aspect is dealt with systematically, showing the purpose of the Directive, giving a summary of it, the UK's compliance with it and the various problems encountered *en route*. The section dealing with bathing waters and the sewage problem can be usefully studied *before* you plan your seaside holiday.

The final part of the book summarises the effect on British legislation of the various EEC Directives, how well (or otherwise) we have complied with the policies and its effect on our own practices. The contribution that the UK makes to EEC policy and the future prospects round off this comprehensive study. A series of appendices guide you through the terminology used and

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