

Book reviews

prevent it reaching the bookshelves of many entomologists. It deserves a much wider audience, for New's thoughtful work not only points the way ahead for Australians, but provides a very valuable summary for conservationists in the northern hemisphere too.

N. Mark Collins, IUCN Conservation Monitoring Centre

The Amazing Armadillo

L.L. Smith and R.W. Doughty

University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1984, HB \$13.95, PB \$6.95

I first came across the armadillo in the delightful Kipling story of childhood. Since then, I have learned all too little about the creature. Hardly anybody writes about its natural history, its ecology or behaviour, its conservation status, whatever. There have been a few notes about its use as a research model for leprosy, and that is about all. All the more welcome, then, is this account of the nine-banded armadillo in the southern US. After reaching northwards from Mexico about 150 years ago, the armadillo has actually extended its range hundreds of miles across southern and south-eastern US—a rare ecological success story.

The book not only deals with the basic biology of the animal and its spreading distribution, it also examines recent popular interest in the armadillo as a symbol of popular culture. The creature certainly seems to have ingratiated itself into the folklore of Texas and several other states—and this additional dimension is splendidly treated by the two authors, being geographers at the University of Texas. Equally to the point, the authors write not only with scientific substance, but also with an engaging style. Altogether, this is a worthy publication, even if rather expensive in hardback form.

Dr Norman Myers, Consultant in Environment and Development

The Wild Sheep of the World

Paul Valdez

Wild Sheep and Goat International, Mesilla, New Mexico, \$40

As was the case with most ungulates, the early literature on wild sheep saw them primarily as hunting trophies, with all the emphasis on bigger

and better 'heads'. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest, especially from the point of view of social organization and behaviour, with the pioneering field work of Geist in North America and Schaller in the Himalayas, demonstrating, amongst other things, the functional significance of bigger and better heads. A further recent development has been the elucidation of the otherwise intractable problem of delimiting the species, using evidence from chromosomes. The time would therefore seem ripe for a world-wide review of the group to bring together all this diverse and scattered information.

Disappointingly, this volume only goes a small way towards fulfilling this. The classification is indeed brought up to date, although somewhat marred by the frequent use of the cumbersome and quite unnecessary terms 'moufloniforms', 'argaliforms' and 'pachyceriforms' for the three groups (particularly redundant in view of the fact that the first two are, in the classification used, synonymous with the single species *Ovis orientalis* and *O. ammon*).

Brief introductory chapters on the discovery of wild sheep, their life-history and habitats are followed by two- or three-page accounts of each subspecies, with descriptions mostly quoted verbatim from early sources. A final chapter, by J.H. Batten, extols the delights of sheep hunting in terms that will seem strangely archaic to most readers. Both hunters and conservationists will be disappointed that the range of each form is only given briefly as the maximum historical range, with no information on current status nor on the problems of conservation and management.

This then is a handbook that will appeal mainly to the hopefully dwindling band of sheep hunters rather than to the increasing ranks of wildlife watchers.

G.B. Corbet, British Museum (Natural History)

A Dictionary of Animal Names in Five Languages—Mammals

V.E. Sokolov

Moscow: 'Russkiy yazyk', 1984, 3.30 rubles.

Obtainable from Collet's, Dennington Estate, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 2QT, UK, £5.75

Other multilingual dictionaries of animal names

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