

Book reviews

Management of Large Mammals in African Conservation Areas

Edited by R. Norman Owen-Smith
HAUM Educational Publishers, Pretoria, 1983, R30·20

Selecting Wildlife Census Techniques

R.F.H. Collinson
Monograph 6, Institute of Natural Resources, University of Natal, 1985 R6·00

The problem of over-abundance, real or imagined, of large wild mammals was considered at a conference in Hyannis, Massachusetts, in 1980 and the results were published by Academic Press in *Problems in Management of Locally Abundant Wild Mammals*, edited by Jewell and Holt. This generated considerable interest, particularly in southern Africa, and a follow-up symposium was held in Pretoria in April 1982 to consider, in an African context, the problems raised in Hyannis. The present volume contains the papers presented at the symposium. They are divided into five sections, namely: Goals, Case Studies, Ecological Principles, Management Actions and Socio-Political Considerations. Goals are certainly essential in wildlife management, although rarely stated, and it is good to see the issue debated here even if a clear consensus does not emerge. The section on ecological principles includes some stimulating papers, as does that on management actions. These sections consolidate, rather than reconcile, the differences between the culling-orientated management philosophy of the south and the more *laissez-faire* attitude in East Africa. The final section on socio-political considerations allows several authors to air their prejudices, not least Ian Parker, whose often sensible suggestions are marred by the confusion of precolonial, ecological man with his rifle-toting, vaccinated descendant. Nevertheless, this section should be read by all FFPS members, especially those who think that conservation problems can always be solved by raising funds. In general, the book can be thoroughly recommended, although it is a pity that the decent print of the Foreword and abstracts degenerates into camera-ready type for the chapters. Perhaps it is supposed to signify urgency in publication.

The short booklet by Collinson deals with the relative advantages and disadvantages of most forms of wildlife census techniques. It is an

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excellent introduction that will be of greatest value to students. I cannot see practitioners needing the book. If they do, they ought not to be entrusted with the job.

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Status and Conservation of the World's Seabirds

ICBP Technical Publication No. 2

Edited by J. P. Croxall, P. G. H. Evans and R. W. Schreiber

International Council for Bird Preservation, 1983, £26·90, including postage, from ICBP, 219c Huntingdon Rd, Cambridge CB3 0DL, UK

This magisterial survey of the seabirds of the world is based on an ICBP symposium held in Cambridge in 1982, and, considering the size of the book, nearly 800 pages, ICBP is to be commended for getting it out so quickly. There are 47 papers by more than 80 authors, and every important part of the world is covered, from pole to pole. Seabirds are sensibly defined to include what most people think of as seabirds, i.e. excluding not only phalaropes, grebes and sea ducks, but also those pelicans, cormorants, gulls, terns and skimmers that are primarily or exclusively freshwater birds. Though there is no full index, a systematic list at the beginning directs the reader to the papers that deal with each species.

ICBP being in the conservation business, conservation problems are dealt with fully, both in the status articles and in several purely conservation contributions at the end, on such problems as gillnet fishing. An admirable feature is the summary of the conservation recommendations from the ICBP Seabird Specialist Group, under the headings of surveys, elimination of aliens, establishing and improving reserves, habitat destruction, control of exploitation, education and publicity, legal protection and research. One interesting fact emerging from the Group's work is that the breeding grounds of six seabirds are still unknown: two petrels, two storm petrels, a gull and the Chinese crested tern *Sterna bernsteini*. In addition, despite a century or more of hard searching, the nest of the marbled murrelet has yet to be found in British Columbia.

Let us hope that ICBP will carry on with this