

Book reviews

excellent series and give us other, equally comprehensive, guides to the status and conservation of other groups of birds, and that the Specialist Groups of the IUCN Species Survival Commission will follow suit with plants and the rest of the animals. We must not get the idea that species are only important when they actually get into a Red Data Book.

Richard Fitter

The Fragmented Forest: Island Biogeography Theory and the Preservation of Biotic Diversity

Larry D. Harris

University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1984, PB £10.95, HB £22.95

As the world's natural forests dwindle under modern land-use, so the remaining 'islands' become more important as representatives of mature ecosystems. Sound management is therefore vital, and Larry Harris builds essentially on two themes to advocate his approach. First, that for forest islands to function independently of their surroundings, 'their size might need to be so large that their conservation would be outside the realm of existing conditions or current political and economic restraints', and second, that since forest conservation is aimed primarily at the future, 'we must follow procedures that will ensure the sustained development of replacement stands'.

In a very timely and cogent work, Harris draws together scientific information about the fir forests of the Cascade mountains in Washington and Oregon, and uses it to evaluate the utility of island biogeography theory as a guide to forest management. He opens with a detailed description of the forest community, and draws the reader into a careful evaluation of alternative management approaches, looking at such factors as island area requirements for specified flora and fauna, island size versus island number, and inter-island distance. In the final section of the book, he gives his prescription: the Archipelago Approach, involving long-rotation islands. These are permanently undisturbed areas, surrounded by buffers of managed forest that are cut sequentially in cake-slices to maximize the average age difference between the sections. He also elaborates

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upon the uses of riparian strips as corridors for genetic flow between stands.

For me, a lot of the importance of *The Fragmented Forest* lies in its heuristic value. Much more than in North America, the forests of the developing world are being exploited for short-term profits, and there is powerful ammunition in this book for those whose role it is to persuade governments to aim natural community management at perpetual benefits. It should be on every conservation biologist's bookshelf.

Michael Kavanagh, World Wildlife Fund—Malaysia

Threatened Birds of Africa and Related Islands

The ICBP/IUCN Red Data Book, Part 1

N.J. Collar and S.N. Stuart

International Council for Bird Preservation, 1985, £24.00, including postage, from ICBP, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, CB3 0DL, UK

It would be very easy to write several pages of praise for the new bird *Red Data Book* (RDB) and I have absolutely no doubt that many such reviews will appear. However, a function of a review is also to bring out any points for discussion, even if there are no criticisms. Firstly, I must emphasize that this is essential reference for even the smallest library and I have nothing but unqualified praise for the authors.

The introduction claims that ICBP was the first (1922) 'global organization to be set up for wildlife conservation'. This is a quibbling point for members of the FFPS, since we always claim to be the first (1903) international wildlife conservation society—the British Empire in those days covered more countries than did ICBP. More seriously though, there are a number of changes in the presentation of the RDB which are noteworthy. Subspecies have been excluded, and while I believe this to be a fully justified decision on taxonomic grounds, it does mean that a number of interesting populations have probably been excluded.

A problem with all the IUCN (and ICBP) *Red Data Books* is inconsistent use of categories for degrees of threat. To start with, in this present volume, it is difficult to find the definitions, and a

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