

communication before going on to look at behaviour in modern farming systems and the welfare problems that can result.

One great strength of this book is that it does not confine itself to animal welfare and yet provides an extremely coherent background for the discussion of welfare issues. By taking a broad view of social behaviour in an evolutionary setting, it shows how we might use knowledge of the way in which natural selection has shaped behaviour to shed new light on the behaviour of farmed animals now kept in extremely unnatural environments. David Wood-Gush would have loved this book!

A second strength of this book is that it does not take on too much. The firm hand that the editors have taken with their contributing authors they have also applied to themselves. They have resisted the temptation to discuss all behaviour of farmed species and confined themselves to social behaviour. This has paid off. Because all the farmed species are social, and because many of their welfare problems arise from distortions of their social interactions in one way or another, the book is very much at the forefront of major welfare issues such as the stress caused by early weaning and the breaking of social bonds. It provides an extremely useful coverage of a wide variety of issues from domestication to social cognition and the adaptiveness of social behaviour to the role of human–animal interactions. The chapters on individual animals (with the admirable inter-author coherence) form an extremely useful reference base for anyone interested in social behaviour and social interactions.

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***The Conservation Handbook: Research, Management and Policy***

W J Sutherland (2000). Published by Blackwell Science Ltd, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0EL, UK; <http://www.blackwell-science.com>. Distributed by Marston Book Services Ltd, P O Box 269, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4YN, UK. 278 pp. Paperback (ISBN 0 03 205344 5). Price £24.95.

There are fourteen chapters in this book, covering such subjects as the assessment of biodiversity, the monitoring of animals and plants, ecological research techniques, conservation planning, education and ecotourism, the management of species and habitats, and the integration of development and conservation. Twenty pages of (English) references and an index complement the text.

This is an eminently practical publication. Each chapter is divided into sections, rather as in an academic thesis, and in most instances starts with a question — for example, under the section ‘Ecological research techniques’, ‘Why control research?’. This makes reading easier and more interesting. Case studies further enhance the text. The book is packed with useful *information ranging from sections on international agreements, campaigning and fund-raising to descriptions of how to age plants and animals*. As Professor E O Wilson states in his Foreword, “The Handbook is much like a field guide for the identification of species, not to be omitted from one’s luggage or research station”. The strong emphasis throughout on integrating conservation with human development is to be welcomed and will do much to enhance the book’s appeal overseas, especially in developing countries. The author’s sensitivity and concern in this respect is emphasised by the inclusion of at least two Africans amongst the acknowledgements and by his and the publishers’ generosity in making copies of the book available free of charge to practising conservationists in poorer parts of the world.

*The Conservation Handbook* will be of relevance and importance to all those who work with wildlife (vertebrate and invertebrate animals and plants), especially if they are involved in the protection and management of species and habitats and the maintenance of biodiversity. It should also prove to be of interest to welfarists from different backgrounds — zoologists, ethologists, veterinarians and others. At a time when there is discussion about the apparent divisions between conservationists (who tend to be primarily concerned with populations) and welfarists (who are concerned especially with the well-being of individual animals), this book will help to explain what the former do and how their activities can affect animals, plants and the environment.

This said, it is surprising to find deficiencies that could so easily have been rectified if the author had shown drafts of chapters to colleagues in a wider range of disciplines. As far as animal welfare is concerned, it is disappointing not to find this topic indexed. In some parts of the book, such as that on the marking of animals, there is a clear awareness of the need to minimise pain and the author stresses the need for an ethical approach to field work. However, there is a disturbing section in the chapter on collecting in which a number of techniques that are described for killing animals must be questioned. Chloroform is advocated for small mammals, but the method (“Place ... in a container with an air-tight lid containing cotton-wool soaked in chloroform”) will cause asphyxia rather than anaesthesia. Benzocaine is mentioned for fish and amphibians but not for aquatic invertebrates. The most serious *faux pas*, however, are to suggest drowning in 15–25 per cent alcohol solution or warm (43–47°C) water as a method of destroying amphibians, and to state that reptiles are usually killed by freezing which simply reduces the metabolic rate and so, he claims, is considered reasonably humane. The author is clearly unaware of the controversy and research concerning lower vertebrates during the 1980s that drew attention to the unsuitability on welfare grounds of using techniques such as freezing, drowning and decapitation — culminating in the appearance and wide distribution in 1989 of the UFAW/WSPA Working Party Report entitled ‘Euthanasia of Amphibians and Reptiles’.

To continue to advocate such techniques for euthanasia nearly twenty years later in a book that is likely to be used by innumerable field workers, most of whom will have no veterinary or medical background, is at best an unfortunate error. At worst it may reinforce the views of those critics who believe that double standards apply in biological science, with only scant attention paid to the welfare of free-living wildlife.

In all other respects this is a very readable, comprehensive text that fills an important niche. A revised edition, paying attention to the deficiencies above, could help it to meet the requirements of conservationists and welfarists alike.

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### ***Who Cares for Planet Earth? The Con In Conservation***

B Jordan (2001). Published by The Alpha Press, Box 2950, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 5SP, UK. E-mail: [edit@sussex-academic.co.uk](mailto:edit@sussex-academic.co.uk). 128 pp. Hardback (ISBN 1 898595 35 6). Price £16.95/\$27.50

This book discusses the current strategies, beliefs and rhetoric associated with conservation, and looks critically at what is happening to the earth and what is supposedly being done to correct it. The tone of the book is set in the first sentence of the forward, written by Dr Richard Leakey: “Rhetoric, wild promises, bold statements ... there is a problem and we all