

Priorities for the Conservation of Mammalian Diversity: Has the Panda had its Day? edited by Entwistle, A. & Dunstone, N. (2000), 472 pp., 46 line diagrams, 10 half-tones, 37 tables, ISBN 0521 77536 1, UK. (paperback), 0521 77279 6 (hardback); £24.95 (paperback), £70.00 (hardback), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

The recent release of the 2000 *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* (Hilton-Taylor, 2000) focuses our worst fears: an alarmingly high number of species are at risk of disappearing forever. Among mammals, 24 per cent are classified as Threatened and the number of species identified as Critically Endangered – those closest to extinction – has increased dramatically since the previous assessment in 1996. These statistics demand careful planning of future directions for conservation action. What do we know and what do we need to know? How should our work proceed? And, most importantly – given the restrictions of limited resources and personnel, how should we establish priorities for conservation? *Priorities for the Conservation of Mammalian Diversity* addresses these questions in regard to the conservation of mammalian diversity, in addition to examining the role of mammalian conservation in the big picture of preservation of the earth's biodiversity.

Part 1 poses two questions. First, what is so special about mammals that leads them to be targeted for conservation rather than (or at the expense of) other taxonomic groups? Second, within the mammals, what is the role of the so-called 'flagship', 'keystone', 'umbrella', and 'indicator' species? (terms well-defined and analyzed in the chapter by Leader-Williams & Dublin). It becomes apparent that not all mammals are created equal. Mammalian conservation work has favoured large charismatic species ('flagships'), rather than those most in need of attention (see also Amori & Gippoliti, 2000). Further, the management approach has concentrated on single-species rather than addressing the preservation of biodiversity at the ecosystem level. Part 2 plays off and extends the material introduced in Part 1 by addressing methods that can be established to set priorities for mammalian conservation. Authors in both parts have done a thorough job of highlighting the interplay between the various scientific, sociological, political, and practical factors that influence these contentious issues.

The heart of the book, Part 3, showcases examples of effective conservation programmes utilizing mammals.

Readers are presented with a variety of activities highlighting the need for effective public relations and legislation to catalyse a conservation agenda, the importance of protected areas and recommendations for increasing their effectiveness, the impact of conservation outside protected areas and flexible management initiatives that must be undertaken to integrate local communities into these activities, the role of ecotourism, and the priorities that must be established to conduct effective and meaningful *ex situ* conservation. Unfortunately, the geographical coverage is biased, focusing primarily on mammal conservation in the UK and Africa. And in spite of the frequent plea to work closely with native communities, none of the non-UK chapters is authored by a local person working at the local level (the closest being the Beijing-based team writing on pandas). The volume would have been enriched with the inclusion of accounts from some of the innovative projects involving mammal conservation which have been achieved by local communities.

The final three chapters in Part 3 present over-arching summaries of mammalian conservation and reflect on the options and priorities for future action. Especially provocative is the treatment by McNeely on how to address the root causes of our biodiversity crisis and how to construct an effective overall strategy for mobilizing political and economic support for conserving mammals. The final chapter by Entwistle and Dunstone provides a comprehensive capstone to the volume. Their effort here, as well as in their overall organization and presentation of the book, bears witness to the importance of considering the conservation of mammals and the manner in which we frame our approach. And the message delivered should resonate for all readers, from students and the informed public to those on the frontlines of conservation.

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References

- Amori, G. & Gippoliti, S. (2000) What do mammalogists want to save? Ten years of mammalian conservation biology. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, **9**, 785–793.
- Hilton-Taylor, C., compiler. (2000) *2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. IUCN Publications, Gland.

Threatened Birds of the Philippines: The Haribon Foundation/Birdlife International Red Data Book by Collar N.J., Mallari, N.A.D. & Tabaranza, B.R. (2000), 559 pp. ISBN 971 569 334 2. Paperback: £37.50. Bookmark Inc, Makati City, Philippines.

The Philippines has more seriously threatened endemic bird species than any other country in the world; an impressive and depressive statistic which says as much about the country's extraordinary biological importance as it does about the ecological crisis it now faces. The biodiversity conservation stakes are as high, and certainly more pressing, in the Philippines than just about anywhere else.

The issues surrounding this country's exceptionally high biodiversity, endemism (the other half of the biodiversity equation) and degrees of threat are neatly and authoritatively summarised in this new book, which is one of a small flurry of major new publications on the wildlife (particularly the avifauna) of this country. Being a part of BirdLife International's (BLI) Asia Partnership Red Data Book (RDB) Programme, the text also includes a (by now customary and necessary, if tedious) review of the new IUCN status categories, and useful reviews of the relevant literature, local legislature, some current conservation initiatives, factors and trends leading to the decline of Philippine birds, and some of the 'key sites' for their future protection (i.e. areas where two or more threatened species 'co-occur'); the latter also picking up on BLI's earlier and concurrent 'EBA' and 'IBA' themes. However, the bulk of the text naturally comprises standard entry accounts of the distribution, population, ecology, threats and conservation measures proposed for each of the (65) species currently listed as 'Vulnerable', 'Endangered' or 'Critically Endangered'. The whole thing is rounded off and garnished with clear maps, a good gazetteer and half-a-dozen appendices; the latter covering other 'Globally Threatened' species previously or occasionally recorded in the Philippines; short reviews of all (48) 'Near-Threatened' species; listings of these species arranged both systematically and biogeographically; and analyses of the various threats and trends pertaining to each species. All nicely done. So far so good.

Unfortunately, however, the book is marred by some sloppy production problems (numerous pages in my copy are printed out of sequence) and a truly measly assortment of poorly reproduced illustrations (better, on the whole, not to have bothered at all). Worse, the authors' own biases show through starkly in some places. For example, an early statement that 'the most important bird species in the Philippines is the Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jeffreyi*)' strikes one as being singularly inappropriate in the context of this book. The

authors justify this standpoint on the basis that this (admittedly wondrous) species is the national bird (which is a bit weak given that until recently this honour was bestowed, believe it or not, on the common Eurasian tree sparrow *Passer montanus*), and because of its significance as the 'mightiest [*sic*] flagship for forest conservation', whose effective conservation 'would virtually guarantee the survival of 27 threatened (and nearly twice as many endemic) species in the four islands on which it occurs'. However, this argument is also a bit weak because (being a top predator needing plenty of space) the Philippines' largest eagle survives only in areas where most forest remains; whereas the majority of the country's other most threatened birds are concentrated in the more denuded regions where the eagle does not occur or has already been extirpated. QED investing in areas supporting Philippine eagles will not conserve the larger majority of the Philippines' most threatened endemic birds and other wildlife. This is not, one hastens to add, in any way intended to counter on-going efforts towards the protection of this bird, but merely to question the undue focus on this species which is already the beneficiary of various long-standing and comparatively well-resourced conservation initiatives. Such a stance is also potentially unhelpful to everyone striving to promote the conservation of other Philippine species and habitats – many of which are vastly more immediately threatened than this eagle and its habitats – and it reinforces widespread local perceptions that this is the only (or only really important) threatened Philippine bird species. As it is, however, the authors not only help perpetuate this myth, but go on to propose a whole new 'Philippine Eagle Conservation Strategy (PECS)' and to devote 62 pages to the account of this species – versus an average of 6 pages for each of the other 64 species. This would be fine if the book was intended as a treatise or action plan on the eagle, but it isn't and it shouldn't be. On the contrary, it should be, but isn't, a wholly objective review of the threatened birds of the Philippines – at least that what the title implies.

Unfortunately, however, the coverage of the rest of the country's threatened birds is not only unequal but far from complete. This is due to BLI's evident aversion to subspecies, of which the Philippines is blessed with a vast array of endemic and near-endemic forms. Many of these are highly distinct and severely threatened, a few are already extinct, but none are mentioned in this book. This not only does a signal disservice to these taxa (ditto everyone working to conserve these taxa), but it produces a grave underestimation of the larger diversity and overall conservation status of the Philippine avifauna. Moreover, the omission of these taxa from the BLI listings will inevitably percolate down to the local

listings. The authors appear careless of the fact that data on these taxa are not otherwise easily available to local officials, thereby also effectively excluding these taxa (and the 'ammunition' they represent) from most local planning and decision-making processes. This is as nonsensical as it is wrong. There is no good reason for not including these taxa, which can't be due to lack of space (viz. 62 pages on *P. jeffreyi*) or time, since even an additional appendix devoted to these forms would have done much to redress the balance.

Having said all that, this book is, on the whole, a welcome and important addition to the small, but now happily expanding, collection of key references on Philippine wildlife, which every aficionado should possess. It is just a pity that the opportunity to produce a much needed comprehensive review of the threatened birds of the Philippines went badly astray in some places. This is a good book, but it is not what it says it is. Rather, it is a worthy and authoritative account of *some* of the threatened birds of the Philippines, with particular reference to the Philippine eagle.

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Where Next? – Reflections on the Human Future edited by Poore, D. (2000), 344 pp., ISBN 1 84246 000 5, Paperback: £9.95, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK.

Among the affluent in the world, the Malthusian trilogy of war, pestilence and famine may be thought a threat of the past. But globally they are replaced today by threats of terrorism, pollution, climate change, globalization of markets and over-exploitation of the resources on which humanity depends for its very survival. Moreover, there are now real doubts about the capacity of existing systems of governance – economical, political and social – to meet these challenges and secure a sustainable future for humanity (World Humanity Action Trust, 2000).

Where Next?, produced under the auspices of the New Renaissance Group, is a timely publication. It is a heterogeneous but thought-provoking collection of essays shedding light on such challenges. The essayists have wide experience from the natural and social sciences to law and international relations. Each responded to the editor's invitation to 'explore the intellectual basis of the present human predicament' and to cover 'the possibilities of its [humanity] attaining ... a dynamic equilibrium with the rest of nature and the directions in which progress might lie'. They reveal strong elements of both pessimism and optimism.

Max Nicholson opens calling for a new renaissance through which peoples may identify the place of the human species within the natural world. Charles Pereira's authoritative essay on the likely future scenario on food supply points to the need for substantial improvements in management if his sobering forecast is to be avoided.

Virginia Abernethy underlines the implications of population projections whilst Ghillean Prance highlights the crucial significance of sustaining biodiversity. Robert Goodlad tackles environmental sustainability, pointing to the shortcomings of the current economic system, which fails to embrace the value of natural capital, a message pressed home by David Burns in his satirical essay on market forces.

The future impact of information technology (IT), for better and worse, in developing new governance systems is highlighted by Justin Arundale. The role of cities, the issue of sustainable livelihoods, and limitations to sustainable development are tackled by David Goode, Ashok Khosla and David Fleming, respectively, in humanity's search for a sustainable future. Shridath Ramphal takes this up in the context of global governance and international institutions.

James O'Connell shows how technology, as a prime driver of change, may both enhance and threaten the human condition. He calls for a vision for global unity and shared human values, within which to reap the benefits and reduce the threats. The role of law is the focus of Nigel Simmonds's essay. Like others, he argues the need for a common ethical understanding.

Martin Palmer and Hermann Bondi opine that both religion and education face critical challenges – the first of making teachings relevant to saving the natural world and the second, of enhancing curiosity and teaching science quite differently. Whereas Philip Stewart advocates adoption of a 'universal ecology' and the return of a broad education more akin to that of mediaeval universities than current Cartesian practice.

So, indeed, where next? The Editor selects three key issues: the increase in human numbers, humanity's impact on the environment and the proliferation of violence and displacement. He proposes two prerequisites for their solution: good government and devolved management with a more equitable global application of technology and a more appropriate economical framework.

The message that I register, above all, is optimistic: there could be a brighter tomorrow, for all humanity. But it cannot come without a shared value system – backed by a common ethical code and the rule of law – and a clear vision. But, in my view, that will not emerge without modification to governance systems, greater understanding (and acceptance) of the situation, and a better education of our children to give them the flexible

holistic approach needed to resolve these issues and to achieve a truly sustainable future for humanity.

An unobtainable Holy Grail? Perhaps? For the sake of our children, and theirs, I hope not. And we can, as citizens of the world, draw inspiration and encouragement from these essays. But, as Proverbs 29, v.18 has it: 'Where there is no vision, the people perish'.

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Reference

World Humanity Action Trust (2000) *Governance for a Sustainable Future*, Report of the World Humanity Action Trust, Foreword, p. 7.

New publications

(Note: * indicates those titles that are available through the NHBS Mailorder Bookstore, 2-3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, UK. Tel.: + 44 1803865913; Fax: + 44 1803865280; E-mail: nhbs@nhbs.co.uk; Web: www.nhbs.com)

St Helena and Ascension Island: Origins, Evolution and Natural History by Ashmole, P. & Ashmole, M. (2000) Anthony Nelson, UK. 500 pp., including 32 pp full colour maps, diagrams, and line drawings, £30.*

Wide-ranging assessment of the natural history of these two islands. Covers geological and ecological history, the colonization by early animal and plant settlers, the islands today, and conservation, restoration and sustainable development. The fauna and flora of both islands are examined in depth, with a comprehensive treatment of both alien and endemic animals, and endemic plants.

Food for Thought: The Utilization of Wild Meat in Eastern and Southern Africa by Barnett, R. (2000) TRAFFIC, UK.

Documents the utilization of wild meat in the region, its economic value to rural communities, and the impact of harvest on protected areas and individual species valued in the trade. (See 'Results of bush meat survey published', p. 5 for further details.)

Available at www.traffic.org/temp/report.htm

Threatened Birds of the World by BirdLife International (2000) Published by Lynx Ediciones, Spain on behalf of BirdLife International. 850 pp., Colour photographs and maps throughout, £59.50.*

Includes species accounts for each of the 1186 bird species threatened with global extinction. Mapped and

illustrated together for the first time, the species accounts provide full data on distribution, numbers, population trends, identification, habitat, diet and breeding ecology. The main threats facing each species are highlighted and conservation targets to be met by 2005 are outlined. An essential reference text.

The 2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species edited by Hilton-Taylor, C. (2000), paperback and CD set (includes 64 pp., booklet with colour maps, graphs and charts), £30*, IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.

This publication is a major landmark in the IUCN Red Lists series because it is the first time that listings of animals and plants have been amalgamated and the first time that the *Red List* has been produced on CD-ROM. All bird species have been reassessed by BirdLife International, and the Species Survival Commission have reassessed many antelope and bat species, most primate and sharks, all Asian freshwater turtles, more molluscs and many others. The plant Specialist Groups have reassessed all conifers and for the first time have assessed mosses and a large number of carnivorous plants. In addition, the geographical plant Specialists Groups have provided new assessments for plants in biodiversity hotspots such as Cameroon, Mauritius and South Africa. Available at www.redlist.org

Whale Watching 2000: Worldwide Tourism Numbers, Expenditures, and Expanding Socioeconomic Benefits by Hoyt, E. (2000), The International Fund for Animal Welfare. 175 pp.

A comprehensive, global report on the economic boom of whale watching, citing it as a billion-dollar industry, with at least 492 communities in 87 countries now having whale watching businesses.

Available at www.ifaw.org/press/pr082200.html

Welfare Ark: Suggestions for a Renewed Policy in Zoos by Margodt, K. (2000), 157 pp., £13.95, VUB Universiteit Press, Belgium.*

Aims to bridge the gap between zoos and organizations for animal welfare and animal rights and offering a constructive proposal for innovation.

Invasive Species in a Changing World edited by Mooney, H.A. & Hobbs, R.J. (2000), 457 pp., figures, tables and maps. £28.70*, Island Press, USA.

Brings together leading scientists from around the world to examine the invasive species phenomenon and to

consider the mutual interactions between global change and invasive species that are likely to occur in the 21st century.

A Primer of Conservation Biology (Second edition) by Primack, R.B. (2000), 246 pp., 95 illustrations, £19.95*, Sinauer, USA.

Introduces the key elements of conservation biology. Case studies demonstrate the controversies in the field, and the choice of examples shows the full range of species, habitats and geographical areas of the world. Conveys the essentials of conservation biology to a wide audience in the fields of biology, ecology, wildlife biology and environmental policy.

Communicating Nature Conservation: a Manual on Using Communication in Support of Nature Conservation Policy and Action edited by Rientjes, S. (2000), 96 pp., £22.95*, ECNC, Netherlands.

Provides practical, down-to-earth information about communication and partnership building for nature conservation.

Nature in Focus: Rapid Ecological Assessment by Satre, R. *et al.* (2000), 224 pp., Illustrations, figures, tables and maps. £31.10*, Island Press, USA.

An in-depth guide to the theory and practice of rapid ecological assessment (REA), offering a detailed approach for assessing biodiversity in a rapid and integrative manner.

A Guide to Designing Legal and Institutional Frameworks on Alien Invasive Species by Sine, C., Williams, N. & Gündling, L. (2000), IUCN Publications, Cambridge, UK.

Provides practical information and guidance for developing and/or strengthening legal and institutional frameworks on alien invasive species, consistent with Article 8(h) of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as pertinent obligations under other international instruments. Presents a structured framework for dealing with alien invasive species issues and contains practical examples to assist in understanding the impact of alien species introductions.

Available at www.iucn.org/themes/law

The Conservation Handbook: Research, Management and Policy by Sutherland, W.J. (2000), 296 pp., 100 illustrations, £24.95*, Blackwell Science Ltd, UK.

New textbook offering clear guidance on the implementation of conservation techniques. The wide range of methods described include those for ecological research, monitoring, planning, education, habitat management and combining conservation with development. Eighteen case studies illustrate how the methods have been applied. A valuable reference book.

Requiem for Nature by Terborgh, J. (2000), 234 pp., £23.90*, Island Press, USA.

Examines current conservation strategies and considers the shortcomings of parks and protected areas from both ecological and institutional perspectives, and explains how seemingly pristine environments can degrade gradually. Terborgh also describes the difficult social context – a combination of poverty, corruption, abuses of power, political instability – in which tropical conservation must take place.

World Resources 2000–2001: People and Ecosystems – The Fraying Web of Life by United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank and the World Resources Institute (2000), World Resources Institute, USA.

Examines coastal, forest, grassland, freshwater and agricultural ecosystems. Grades the health of these ecosystems to produce the goods and services (e.g. production of food, provision of water, maintenance of biodiversity, and provision of recreation and tourism opportunities) on which the world is dependent. Contains case studies from around the world on how people are acting to reverse the damage to their ecosystems. An up-to-date analysis of what we will need to know in order to address the global challenges ahead.

Available at www.wri.org/wri/wr2000/

Preliminary Assessment: The Current Situation and Capacity Building Needs of Environmental Funds in Africa by United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Environment Facility (2000).

Identifies and discusses environmental funds in Africa, including existing funds, funds in the process of establishment and proposed funds. Invites fund developers to identify both the areas in which their capacities need strengthening and the means by which they could do this.

Available at www.undp.org/bpsp/global_links/pubs.htm

The Root Causes of Biodiversity Loss by Wood, A., Stedman-Edwards, P. & Mang, J. (2000), 399 pp., £14.99*, Earthscan, UK.

Examines the underlying causes of biodiversity and species loss, looking at social, economic, political and biological factors, and assesses why they are driving people to degrade the environment. Analyses a range of case studies from around the world and integrates them into a new, interdisciplinary framework for understanding the situation.

Genetics, Demography and Viability of Fragmented Populations edited by Young, A.G. & Clarke, G.M. (2000), 48 pp., 67 figures, £24.95*, Cambridge University Press, UK.

A detailed introduction to the genetic and demographic issues relevant to fragmented populations. Presents two sets of case studies – one on animals, the other plants – which illustrate a variety of approaches.

People, Plants and Justice: The Politics of Nature Conservation edited by Zerner, C. (2000), 416 pp., £30.50, Columbia University Press, USA.

Containing original case studies from Asia, Latin America, Africa and the South Pacific, this book focuses on topics as diverse as ecotourism, oil extraction, timber extraction and property rights. Probes the social and environmental consequences of market-linked nature conservation schemes.

The Handbook of the Convention on Biological Diversity by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2001), 500 pp., £60 (hardback) and £24.95 (paperback)*, Earthscan, UK.

Presents a guide to the decisions adopted and the ongoing activities of the Convention, initiated at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.