

What I Tell You Three Times is True: Conservation, Ivory, History and Politics by Ian Parker (2004), 414 pp., Librario, Kinloss, UK. ISBN 1 904440 38 X (pbk), £14.99.

At a time when the issue of trade in African ivory has once again brought controversy to the Conference of the Parties of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, <http://www.cites.org>), this book on elephants and ivory is to be welcomed. *What I Tell You Three Times is True* is part autobiography, part history (of Africa and of trade in ivory), part political analysis (Ian Parker writes bluntly about corruption), part thriller (murky hotel rooms, assignments, and nobbled policemen), and part philosophical reflection on the state of conservation, past and present. The title (taken from Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark*), epitomizes Parker's belief in the capacity of conservationists to mislead both themselves and everybody else. It is part of his ethos, whether viewing tusks in a container behind a police station in Mogadishu, dealing with government ministers or the apparatchiks of conservation NGOs, or following elephants in the bush, that you should not believe everything you see or are told. Conservationists, he says, have 'a magnificent capacity to ignore evidence' (p. 365).

Ian Parker was born in Africa, of a long line of European residents, and has lived in Kenya since the outbreak of the Second World War. His memories provide an invaluable perspective on the end of imperialism and the 40 years of independence, and he tells it as he sees it, warts and all. He joined the Kenya Game Department in the 1950s, and he offers sharp and mostly affectionate insights into the 'band of gentlemen' who ran it, including George Adamson, David Sheldrick, Bill Woodley and Rodney Elliott, and the developing battle against poachers. His running theme is elephants and their hunters, and of course ivory (and the working of the Mombassa Ivory Room). At Kenyan independence, Ian Parker missed the 'golden bowler' that allowed UK-employed British colonial officers to retire with a lump sum, and stayed on, running the Galana Game Management Scheme. Within a year he had resigned, to set up a wildlife research and management consultancy, Wildlife Services Ltd. From then on Parker found his true métier, as a sometimes bloody-minded independent in both thought and deed.

The book details the anti-poaching campaign of the 1970s, particularly the work of Rodney Elliott, and the quagmire of duplicity and doublespeak in which investigations became mired. The book names names, and shows photographs of surprising permits to export ivory and rhino horn. Parker undertook a major study of the ivory trade in the late 1960s, and again in the 1970s, the latter provoking official reactions worthy of a John le Carré novel. He discusses his experiences in the Sudan, Somalia and Burundi in detail, setting the historical context and describing the sometimes cloak and dagger nature of his work. In Burundi, for example, he was employed to mark ivory stocks before the country acceded to CITES (much of it from Zaire, now Democratic Republic of Congo, some with official Game Department markings from Kenya and Tanzania), in the process being leant on by various powerful interests.

Parker argues that conservationists had (and continue to have) a poor understanding of the amount of ivory in trade, or the motivations of those trading in it. This is no arid or detached academic analysis: Parker traded in ivory himself, and he writes with an insider's knowledge of ivory and those trading in it. The 'river of ivory' leaving Africa in the 1960s, 70s and 80s was a trade in which governments and their employees were widely complicit. Much of it went undetected and unmeasured. Parker argues that declines in elephant populations through the 20th century (including the 1970s) were not due to variations in ivory prices, but to the inexorable conversion of land for agriculture, a process that long predated independence, and which drove elephant declines and range contractions at a reasonably constant rate. His argument throughout is that ivory, and rhino horn, were mostly not traded by Mafia-like networks of specialists, but by general traders. Like gems, they were attractive commodities, as they had been for centuries, because they were convertible and held their value. The very economic uncertainties of the continent, compounded by its lack of political stability, made the only reliable economy the informal one, and the black economy had ivory at its heart.

Ian Parker is caustic about CITES (he describes as 'an orgy of silliness' the huge expansion of species listed on Appendices I and II, p. 316), and details its failings. He describes specific meetings and people and decisions, and comments sharply upon them. He offers convincing

theories about South African government involvement in ivory and rhino horn trading as part of its intelligence gathering and policy of political destabilization in neighbouring southern African states in the 1980s.

The book does not tell its story dispassionately. Ian Parker is no stranger to controversy, and by no means shrinks from it here. His belief that the attempt to ban the ivory trade is futile and foolish, his engagement in that trade, his experience of shooting elephants in a world that accords them special status on humanitarian grounds, and his willingness to take on the powers that be in conservation have all made him a controversial figure. Clearly he is no believer in letting bygones be bygones. He gleefully seeks to settle old scores, for example over the way he was 'stitched up' and made to appear corrupt by an article in a British newspaper (and by implication by staff within CITES) in 1989, or in his account of the strange partnerships of WWF in its covert funding of anti-poaching work in southern Africa.

What I Tell You Three Times is True is sad, fiercely critical and funny by turns. Ian Parker's writing offers a disconcerting blend of fireside, lecture room and soapbox styles. The result is an intelligent, irreverent, and energetic book, nicely illustrated with black and white photographs, many of wildlife species by Peter Davey. The preface reveals that the book was cut by a third from its original length, but there is still a whole shelf of different books in here trying to get out. However, while it is long, and sometimes the editing joins show, this book is never dull. Ian Parker castigates conservation (he describes it, for example, as 'an irrational faith as bedevilled with fundamentalism as any other religion in modern times', p. 13), and itemizes some of its more bizarre contortions in pursuit of one of its most persistent goals, the preservation of wild populations of elephants. Perhaps only someone who struggles with their own unquenchable belief can present the agnostic case with such creative energy.

In this book Ian Parker casts light on a recent period of history, one that others have experienced but few eye-witnesses have written about. Academic historians have not yet tackled it, and reading Parker's account of skullduggery of various kinds, one wonders what official documents will survive with which they can try to understand the weird world of ivory and elephant conservation in the late 20th century? This book will infuriate some readers and fascinate others, however in it Ian Parker raises important and disturbing questions about conservation. This book makes thought-provoking, uncomfortable, but essential reading.

Bill Adams

Department of Geography, University of Cambridge
Downing Place, Cambridge, CB2 3EN, UK
E-mail wa12@cam.ac.uk

Conservation by Clive Hambler (2004), x + 368 pp., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. ISBN 0 521 80190 7 (hbk), £47.50, ISBN 0 521 00038 6 (pbk), £18.99.

Conservation sets out to provide an overview of the theory and practice of conservation, aimed at undergraduate biology students. As the author recognizes, there are major challenges in scoping this extensive and multi-disciplinary enterprise. The book has many strengths and several weaknesses, which in general may reflect its origin in the academy rather than the field. The book moves from ethics to science to management to the broader social context of conservation. An opening chapter introduces biodiversity, the philosophy and ethics of conservation, and Gaia theory. Three chapters establishing the basics focus on threats to biodiversity, species and habitat priority-setting, and monitoring and Environmental Impact Assessment. Four management-oriented chapters tackle management of habitats, management of species, sustainability and management of semi-natural habitats, and restoration, translocation and mitigation. A final substantive chapter tackles environmental economics, law and education, before a brief conclusion.

The strengths of this book are its accessible treatments of major biological and technical topics in conservation, such as extinction rates, species/area relationships, reserve design, population viability analysis, and survey techniques. These chapters and discussions are well-structured, cogent, clear and interesting, and the criticisms below must be read in the context of this overall appreciation. The discussion of the philosophy and ethics of conservation also falls into this category. I was surprised by how interesting I found some of the topics that I approached with a shameful reluctance, such as *ex situ* conservation.

However, the book is somewhat less satisfying when it addresses the 'messier' aspects of management, and in particular, policy, where technicalities give way to strategy, politics and competing priorities. Here are some of the thorniest and most complex conservation issues: How to deal with conflicts between conservation and local people's needs? What is the utility of sustainable use strategies? How to build long-term societal support for conservation? What are the implications for conservation of a world of escalating population, consumption, trade and poverty? The book would have benefited from a clear and systematic exposition of major underlying tensions in challenges such as species or habitat management, rather than a laundry-list approach of specific conservation examples and management measures adopted. For instance, CITES crops up sporadically throughout the chapter on species management, frequently accompanied by slightly alarming recommendations, without any prior introduction to the general issues, challenges

and debates surrounding wildlife trade and species management under CITES.

The book appears to espouse what might be viewed as the orthodox Western or Northern model of conservation, with an overwhelming focus on strictly protected areas. While this strategy is defensible there is inadequate representation of countervailing arguments, and the complexity of current debates is poorly reflected. There is great emphasis on management through tough enforcement, with little attention paid to the great variety of alternative or complementary methods, such as via incentives or market mechanisms. Community conservation gets short shrift. Introduced at p. 332 of a book which ends at p. 343, it is largely dismissed within a page or two. Most telling is the climax of a paragraph casting doubt on the potential of community conservation: 'How many rhino, elephants, hyaenas or wild dogs survive outside protected areas?' The answer for African elephants, of course, is 'most', in southern Africa, which has most strongly espoused community conservation, and 'hardly any' in Kenya, which has adopted the strategy favoured here. The book has a slightly odd approach to sustainable use. The concept of management for 'sustainability' is introduced as a starkly divergent concept following and in contrast to management for 'conservation', which I found rather puzzling. Doubt is cast on whether use can ever be sustainable, and it is proposed that putative sustainability is largely mythical. This, however, is justified through an extensive discussion on management of semi-natural, largely European grasslands and forests. While this is very interesting and informative in itself, its placement here is slightly mystifying. The relevance of these landscapes to utilization of many species, in particular low volume, high value species or commodities, is somewhat questionable. The relevance of sustainable use to the vast majority of the planet that will never be strictly protected, and the relevance of conservation of wild species that people use and depend on, receives little attention. Ecotourism, as an alternative to consumptive use, is given an enthusiastic thumbs-up, with little reflection of the doubts hanging over its utility and efficacy in contemporary debates. More generally, the book rarely recognizes the necessarily strategic nature of conservation approaches: conservation is among the arts of the possible, and the luxury of choosing the best possible strategy for biodiversity is rarely an option. Sustainable use and community conservation may not be ideal in many situations, but the ideal is rarely feasible.

The perception of conservation as neo-imperialism is raised, and summarily dismissed, without consideration of the actions and activities that fuel that perception. The vigorous ongoing debates around biodiversity and poverty, and more particularly whether protected areas can hurt or should help local people, are largely reduced

to the assertion that while displacement and exclusion are necessary, they must be accompanied by compensation. This gives a slightly rosy view by avoiding mention of widespread historical, and some extremely recent, examples of forcible exclusion without compensation. I found the book mildly discomforting with its use of the inclusive 'we' who are responsible for conservation: who are 'we'? One could gain the impression that all conservation is and will be done by 'us': conservation organizations and like-minded governments of a Northern persuasion. The major, ongoing role of communities in many parts of the world in managing resources and biodiversity is largely unacknowledged. While the growth of Southern NGOs is lauded, one of the strongest messages is not reflected, that people have different strategies and conceptions of conservation, and the Western model does not fit all times and all places.

Rosie Cooney

Fauna & Flora International, Great Eastern House

Tenison Road, Cambridge, CB1 2TT, UK

E-mail rosie.cooney@fauna-flora.org

State of the World's Birds 2004: Indicators for Our Changing World compiled by Leon Bennun, Stuart Butchart, Jonathan Ekstrom, Michael Evans, Lincoln Fishpool, Rob Pople & Alison Stattersfield (2004), 73 pp., BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK. ISBN 0 946888 50 7 (pbk), £10.00.

This is an assessment from BirdLife International, published along with their *Strategy and Action Plan* for the global partnership meeting in 2004. They are all in the same format, with similar layout. I will only deal here with the *State of the World's Birds*, although I will emphasize that the findings and conclusions are well reflected in the rather general recommendations in the other two documents.

State of the World's Birds 2004 is an attractive publication that really asks to be studied. However, it is so packed with information (some of the text in very small fonts) that I doubt many people will read it in its entirety. On the other hand it is easy to browse. This is because every double page is designed in such a way that it makes sense on its own and therefore can be studied independently. Every double page is richly illustrated, and the essence is easy to grasp, as there is a short and clear main message, subheadings with short and clear statements, and several boxes with different kinds of supporting evidence and attractive photos and graphical presentations. There are also relevant website addresses and a publication list for those who want to know more. The topics are clearly organized: firstly a section of double pages with the title *State*, documenting population trends, then a section identifying *Pressures*, and finally a section describing BirdLife's *Response*.

Even a quick browse will provide the key messages and illustrate that BirdLife is not narrowly concerned with saving birds from people, but tries to use the joy and appeal of bird-watching as a vehicle for better management of this world, so that birds as well as people can thrive. The publication is full of interesting stories, not only from the many studies conducted by BirdLife's own research unit. It also reviews a number of others from the recent conservation research literature, and describes the BirdLife network in action. Clear colour graphics illustrate the problems and document the population trends (mainly the declines). Detailed maps illustrate where the threatened species are, and where BirdLife's priority areas are: their Endemic Bird Areas, which was the first priority analysis based on global compilation of species distribution data, and the network of action points, Important Bird Areas. It all testifies to an efficient effort to collect detailed species data.

The described pressures comprise all the well-known threats, with habitat loss and impoverished avifaunas in the monotonous crop lands. But there are also interesting new issues, such as an illustration of critical overlaps between long-line fisheries and albatross foraging, and GIS models of projected impact of global climate change on birds. This section ends with a demonstration of root problems such as poverty and market failures, and the recent documentation of large-scale correlation between human population and biodiversity. Areas with extraordinary concentrations of species also tend to be densely populated, and therefore it is not enough to conserve wilderness areas with no people. A new approach is needed for maintaining species-rich habitats in populated areas.

By linking together this information the publication provides a clear rationale for a modern conservation approach. It is hard to find anything to criticize, except small details. For instance, the map on p. 46 comparing the range of the dunlin *Calidris alpina* with projected losses and expansions of tundra habitat in a global change scenario misses the breeding populations that exist in the Baltic Region and in the British Isles, far south of the tundra. The illustration on p. 55, under the heading 'Different broad-scale conservation priorities overlap extensively' is unconvincing. In my eyes the overlap between priority areas identified by different organizations is not extensive, and I think that a proper statistical test would show that there is less overlap than if each organization had chosen areas at random. This is understandable, as BirdLife's scheme was strictly based on analysis of species distribution data while the other organizations put some weight on pristine environments with few people. A rigorous analysis (for Africa) has shown that BirdLife's priority analysis is the most efficient in terms of numbers of species covered per area unit. The organization could therefore be happy with its

own agenda, but may have found it politically wiser to emphasize the possibilities of alignment and cooperation.

For many years BirdLife has given low priority to captive breeding and population manipulation as conservation tools, and focused much more on problems with unsustainable land use. This line is now clearer than ever before. BirdLife emphasizes the need to work together with local people, engaging local Site Support Groups around their priority sites. The approach described in the Response section is well aligned with the efforts towards sustainable development, and the publication is well suited as hand-out material for aid institutions.

Jon Fjelds 

Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen, Universitetsparken 15
DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark

E-mail iffjeldsaa@zmuc.ku.dk

A New Agenda for Forest Conservation and Poverty Reduction: Making Markets Work for Low-Income Producers by Sara J. Scherr, Andy White & David Kaimowitz (2004), x + 160 pp., Forest Trends, Washington, DC, USA. ISBN 0 9713606 6 9 (pbk), unpriced [also available at <http://www.forest-trends.org/>].

Vast numbers of rural, marginalized poor live in or near the world's remaining natural forests, and the needs of these people are among the principal determinants of the fate of these forests. Given that forests and the lands they occupy are among the very few assets of value available to the rural poor, they are a key element in strategies for poverty reduction. At the same time, the pressing need for poverty reduction defines the context for forest conservation.

The overarching argument of *A New Agenda for Forest Conservation and Poverty Reduction* is that facilitating the participation of low-income producers in markets for forest products can advance poverty reduction and foster development while achieving conservation. The contention that small-scale, forest-based enterprises run by communities can achieve these two goals reflects a great deal of optimism, although the book also identifies numerous challenges that will be faced. The authors advance the same basic tenet that underlies much conservation effort around the world, namely that earning income from forest-based activities, ranging from extraction of timber and non-timber forest products to provision of environmental services, will compel the rural poor to conserve forests. Often, this tenet amounts to an assumption that low-income producers living in or near forests in developing countries exhibit economic behaviour fundamentally different from that of other economic actors, such that they are more willing to forego current income for uncertain benefits in the future. This

assumption requires closer scrutiny than it receives in this book, because building the capacity of low-income producers to participate in markets will require enormous investments with a considerable risk of failure. Scherr *et al.* do not pretend that making markets work for low-income producers will be easy, quick or cheap. They note that efforts in the past have yielded limited success; NGO support often fails because NGOs are not particularly adept at building businesses to participate in competitive markets, and support from the commercial sector is not satisfactory because private sector efforts rarely include environmental considerations in a meaningful way. Nevertheless, the authors call for a host of different forms of support, subsidies and assistance. This raises questions about how the New Agenda is to be financed but, more importantly, how often will particular community-based forest enterprises become self-sustaining. Scherr *et al.* remind us that Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDP) very often fail in part because of an inability to become financially self-sustaining, but their characterization of low-income producers as conservation-minded suppliers of forest products is difficult to differentiate from the ICDP approach.

Although the authors have built an impressive combined record of thoughtful reflections on the challenges of development, conservation and forest management, in this book they appear reluctant to acknowledge that, when pursuing multiple objectives, we typically have to balance trade-offs between those objectives. Instead, this book posits that the New Agenda can deliver economic development, conservation, a safety net for the poor, women's empowerment, more equitable income distribution, democratization and stable government revenue streams. Given the title of the book, the most dissatisfying omission is the failure to confront the trade-offs between habitat conservation and forest exploitation. Forest exploitation typically implies habitat disturbance and to increase incomes, at least in the short term, typically requires increased disturbance. Thus, there virtually always exists some tension between conservation objectives and income generation.

In the context of poverty and limited alternatives, it may well be the case that conservation objectives must give way to income needs, but this trade-off must be explicitly recognized and evaluated. Instead, the narrative in this book insists that if markets are made to work for low-income producers, then we will see progress on all fronts. A more persuasive position may be that forests represent economic assets that should be made available to communities for the purposes of poverty alleviation and economic development, and that doing so will change the context for conservation, presenting new opportunities as well as new challenges. However, the book may not leave the reader convinced

that making markets work for low-income producers in and of itself will achieve conservation.

Eduard Niesten

*Conservation International, 1919 M Street
NW Suite 600, Washington, DC, 20036, USA
E-mail e.niesten@conservation.org*

Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan for West African Chimpanzees compiled and edited by Rebecca Kormos, Christophe Boesch, Mohamed I. Bakarr and Thomas M. Butynski (2003), x + 219 pp., IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. ISBN 2 8317 0733 1 (pbk), £18.00, \$27.00.

As we gradually get used to being in the 21st century we have at the same time to get used to an unpalatable fact: that our closest living relatives are more and more in danger of extinction. Comparative psychologists are at last coming to grips with what the mental differences between us and chimpanzees actually are (as opposed to what we used to assume they are), in the context of the extraordinary similarities that are emerging. Geneticists are seriously discussing whether chimpanzees should be placed in the genus *Homo*. Meanwhile, out there where they live, the people who live alongside chimpanzees are eating them and destroying their habitat. How can we bear this knowledge? And what can we do about it?

This is a volume about the most critical area for chimpanzees: West Africa. In Uganda and Tanzania there is some conservation activity and their human neighbours, in the main, appreciate chimpanzees and are on their side. In West-Central Africa, and even in the sprawling Congo Basin, there are signs of progress. But West Africa has the smallest, most reduced chimpanzee populations alongside the largest, fastest-growing human ones, and there is comparatively little conservation awareness. Many of the countries are going through periods of instability. Sierra Leone recently suffered the most brutal civil war of modern times. Just as the civil war in Liberia has ended, it has erupted in that island of stability, Côte d'Ivoire.

It is against this background that this *Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan for West African Chimpanzees* was written. Chapters by Butynski, Humle and Vigilant set the scene: West African chimpanzees are more different from other 'common' chimpanzees (or 'robust' chimpanzees as Butynski calls them) than the East and Central African ones are from each other. There has even been a proposal to regard them as a different species – a proposal which, in my opinion, must be resisted until it can be shown that they are different in diagnosable heritable characters other than just mitochondrial DNA sequences. It is, moreover, likely that there are two

subspecies in the region, not just one: *Pan troglodytes vellerosus* in Nigeria (extending into Cameroon) and *Pan troglodytes verus* further west.

There is then a country by country assessment, each by a different authority or group of authorities. Some countries, such as Guinea and, unexpectedly, Sierra Leone, still have substantial populations; in others, such as Ghana, the situation is grim. Benin and Togo once had good chimpanzee populations and have lost them.

The third section is an assessment of the threats, and recommendations for action. Chimpanzees are killed for meat, and their habitat is converted to agriculture. When cultivated fields eat into their habitat, chimpanzees turn to crop-raiding. Logging, even if selective, opens up roads into the forest, hunters accompany the loggers, and often actually work to supply the logging crews, and villages and fields spread along the logging roads. There is no doubt that the most immediate threat is hunting – chimpanzees are bushmeat, just like duikers and cane rats – but the whole complex of threats cannot really be disentangled.

One bright spot is rehabilitation, at least into sanctuaries if not directly back into the wild. Janis Carter has long been involved in this process, and gives an honest and unsentimental history of it. There have been well-meaning episodes where ex-captive groups have been shoe-horned thoughtlessly into areas where wild chimpanzees were already at carrying capacity, with results that could, and should, have been predicted. Yet good, well-run sanctuaries (and she describes examples in Gambia, Nigeria and elsewhere) have an enormous educational potential, and local people visit them to appreciate the delights of chimpanzees and to support their conservation.

But study Table 4.1 (p. 28), giving the general statistics of West African habitat countries. See how low the life expectancies are. This is a statistic that is widely misunderstood. Life expectancy at birth in Côte d'Ivoire is 45 years. This does not mean that people do not survive beyond that age; it means that infant mortality is very high (so pulling down the average age of death), and at the same time that fertility is very high (so providing more of this at-risk cohort). People lose a high proportion of their babies, and have a lot more to replace them, and so the population grows. The population of Côte d'Ivoire is growing at 2.45% a year. At that rate, the population will double in *c.* 28.5 years. The most slowly growing country in West Africa is Ghana, whose 1.7% growth rate implies a doubling time of 41 years. Twice the number of people, all needing land to feed them, clean water, and somewhere to live.

The demographic transition – the fall in the birth rate that eventually follows an earlier fall in the death rate –

has been a long time coming in Africa, and especially in West Africa. Strenuous family planning campaigns have hastened it in parts of Asia – China, Thailand, even India – but West Africa has a long way to go. So even when logging has been controlled and people no longer regard chimpanzees as bushmeat, the human population explosion is still there, waiting in the wings.

Colin Groves
School of Archaeology & Anthropology, Building 14
Australian National University, Canberra, Australia
E-mail colin.groves@anu.edu.au

Looking at Mammals in Kyrgyzia, Central Asia by G. G. Vorobeev & Joost van der Ven (2003), 246 pp., Daru Ltd., Doorn, The Netherlands. ISBN 9967 11 184 4 (pbk), \$18.00.

Kyrgyzia, usually known as Kyrgyzstan, is one of five Central Asian republics that used to be part of the Soviet Union, and became abruptly independent in 1991. It is bordered by China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan; in fact, several times by the last two, as not only do they interlock like pieces of a jigsaw, but Kyrgyzstan even includes two small enclaves of Tajik territory, and four tiny ones of Uzbek territory.

The country of Kyrgyzstan is almost entirely mountainous, containing portions of the Tianshan, Alai, Terskey Alatau and other high ranges. The mighty Syr Darya River rises within its borders, and in an upland valley nestles one of Central Asia's largest lakes, Issyk Kul. Why am I telling you all this? Because you won't find it written in this book. In fact, there is not even a general map (although there are small outline maps for each species). For a book written in English as well as Russian, with only subheadings (but no text) in Kyrgyz, and so presumably expecting an international market, this is disappointing. The introduction does give a brief survey of vegetation zones and altitudes, and of the history of study of Kyrgyz mammals, although the reader is left to do some independent research on which oblast is where.

It is if you forget all ideas of an international scope, and view it as a handbook for Kyrgyz citizens, to tell them about their mammals, what they look like (there are very nice colour paintings), where they may be found, and above all why not to hunt them and why to enjoy them for their own sake, that the book comes into its own. This function it fulfils admirably. There is not only a complete if necessarily brief survey of all the recorded species, there are special chapters on the history of failed introductions, and why they failed, and why it was a bad idea in the first place, on what you can get from looking

in owl pellets (what a good idea, this chapter), and finally on how to recognize tracks.

Then there is a chapter on hunting, where you will read the rules about what you can hunt and when you can hunt them and then, bluntly, 'All in all, current rules regarding hunting cannot be supported'. In some respects, the authors imply, public and official attitudes have changed little since the killing of the last tiger (in 1903), which was regarded as a matter for rejoicing; but at last Kyrgyz zoologists are beginning to document their fauna, and I hope that books like this will start to educate the public about the specialness of their country's natural heritage.

Colin Groves

*School of Archaeology & Anthropology, Building 14
Australian National University, Canberra, Australia
E-mail colin.groves@anu.edu.au*

The following publications have been received at the Editorial Office and may be of interest to readers:

A Review of the Conservation Status of the Asian Elephant in Vietnam by P.J. Heffernan & Trinh Viet Cuong (2004), 181 pp., Fauna & Flora International, Cambridge, UK. ISBN 1 903703 08 0, £10.00.

Adaptive Speciation edited by Ulf Dieckmann, Michael Doebeli, Johan A.J. Metz & Diethard Tautz (2004), xiv + 460 pp., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. ISBN 0 521 82842 2 (hbk), £60.00, \$100.00.

The Beast in the Garden: A Modern Parable of Man and Nature by David Baron (2004), 277 pp., W.W. Norton & Co., New York, USA and London, UK. ISBN 0 393 05807 7 (hbk), £18.99/\$24.95.