

Book reviews

jects for Sumatran amateur naturalists. The whole treatment is comprehensive (nearly 1200 references cited) and liberally illustrated with some marvellous colour photographs and a lot of average-to-poor figures. The text is consistently simple, lucid and highly informative. Everyone with interests in South-East Asian biology should have access to a copy. It is such a pleasure to read that I am sure it would make a fine companion to Wallace's *The Malay Archipelago* in any (armchair) traveller's library.

Yet in preparing a thorough account the authors have produced more than a book of purely local interest. Generally concepts are clearly explained when they are introduced and many examples are taken from Peninsular Malaysia, Borneo and further afield, making it an excellent introductory work for students and teachers of the ecology of the humid tropics. It is one of those rare books that teaches without the reader feeling he is being taught; and we all still have much to learn about the tropical rain forest.

Ian Turner, Oxford Forestry Institute, Department of Plant Sciences, University of Oxford, UK.

A Guide to the Fishes of Lake Malawi National Park

Digby Lewis, Peter Reinthal and Jasper Trendall
World Wildlife Fund, Gland, 1986, 71 pp. HB US \$14, PB US \$10, plus postage. Obtainable from National Fauna Preservation Society of Malawi, c/o PO Box 46, Monkey Bay, Malawi. (All proceeds go to conservation projects in Malawi.)

The cichlid fishes of the African great lakes are among the biological wonders of the world; studies of their ecology and behaviour are illuminating how new species evolve. Many of the most colourful forms are now well known as aquarium fishes.

This splendid guide is a 'must' for all who can visit Malawi or who wish to learn more about how these cichlid fishes live in their natural habitats. Illustrated throughout with colour photographs, the text, couched in non-technical language, describes underwater habitats, the habits of the 'mbuna' rock-dwelling fishes and

other cichlid and non-cichlid species found in the various regions of the park, and touches on the other fauna, from the numerous birds and hippos, to traditional fishing methods.

The numerous photographs of this beautiful lake with its alternating sandy shores and rocky coasts include many underwater pictures showing clearly how many species live together, cichlid 'nests' and mouth-brooding parents taking up their young. Colour portraits of over 88 kinds of fishes found in the park aid in fish identification. A removable inset guides visitors round two underwater nature trails.

The Government of Malawi is to be congratulated in the establishment of this National Park (in 1980), which now has World Heritage Status. This example needs to be followed for Lake Tanganyika, which also has spectacular endemic faunas and where pollution from lake basin developments is likely to become a threat. The fragility of these faunas has been emphasized by the decimation of Lake Victoria's cichlids since the introduction of the piscivorous Nile perch (*Lates niloticus*).

The production of this book should do much to encourage visits to this National Park. If you want to see cichlids in nature this is one of the very best places to do so.

Rosemary Lowe-McConnell, Formerly Overseas Fisheries Research Service.

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