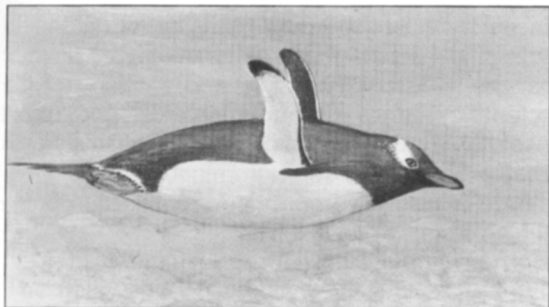


Book reviews



Adelie penguin swimming underwater at Hope Bay, Antarctic Peninsula (from Peter Scott's *Travel Diaries of a Naturalist*).

identity of Captain Cook's kangaroo'. But it is for the plates that most people will want to buy it.
John A. Burton

Latin American Wildlife Trade Laws

Kathryn S. Fuller and Byron Swift
World Wildlife Fund—US \$11.50 from TRAFFIC (USA),
1601 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20009,
USA

Containing over 350 pages of facts in Spanish and English, this is not an easy book to check factually, apart from scattered misspellings of scientific names, which are inevitable in a compilation such as this. Anyone working in any connection with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora will find this an absolute goldmine of information. National legislation is summarised, country by country, and the protected species are listed.

Although the primary task of the TRAFFIC Group is to assemble data, it would have been useful in this work to have had a little more interpretation—most of its users are going to need considerable help and guidance. In particular, it would have been useful to have information as to whether or not each country fully complies with CITES. My reading of the summaries was that very few South American countries are taking effective steps to control the trade in wild plants, for instance. However, as is made clear, this is the first step in an on-going project, and modern information retrieval systems are ideally suited to providing regular updates. The compilers are to be congratulated; let us hope that governments and their enforcement agencies use it.

John A. Burton
Book reviews

Riches of the Rain Forest

W. Veevers-Carter
Oxford University Press, 1984, S\$36.50

From cover to cover of *Riches of the Rain Forest*, Wendy Veevers-Carter leads the reader intelligently through the biological complexities of the Malesian region's major natural community. The approach is that of a rather factual introduction; yet it is never dull, and the breadth of the writer's education is obvious on every page. English, Latin, Malay and Indonesian names mingle easily in the text, and even the Greek origin of the dipterocarps' name—the huge dipterocarp trees comprise the dominant family of the South-East Asian forests—is explained. (The name comes from the Greek for 'two-winged seed': *dis pteron karpos*.) When describing the genus *Eugenia*, which includes the clove, the author shows how the local names, which are presumably ancient, reflect commonly accepted scientific taxonomy: a phenomenon that is a lot more widespread in the tropics than most people realize.

Trees that are important to animals, such as the many figs, and plants of more commercial note, such as the rattans, the hardwood trees and numerous fruit trees, are among those that are described sufficiently to give their essential 'flavour' and, hopefully, to excite the interest of many readers to learn more. Some of the narratives lead to fascinating digressions, among which my favourite is the reference to the improbably named Monsieur Pierre Poivre, an eighteenth century French botanist with a keen interest in spices. Even Captain Bligh of the *Bounty* manages to make an appearance in this book, due to the fact that his ship was carrying breadfruit seedlings on its ill-fated voyage.

All this, and yet there are also easy explanations of topics from gene pools and coevolution to soil quality and poisons in plants! Nevertheless, this is a gentle introduction, strongly to be recommended for those whose knowledge of the rain forest is minimal and whose interest may yet be latent. It is illustrated throughout by the superb artistry of Mohamed Anwar of the Bogor Herbarium, and my only real criticism of the book is that he has been grossly under-credited with nothing more than a mention in the Acknowledgments. Without doubt, the combined work of