

*Wildlife Management in Savannah and Woodland* results from the Ibadan/Garua International Symposium on Wildlife Management which drew together wildlife biologists both from East and West Africa. Most of the research on African wildlife in the last twenty years has been concentrated in the open savanna habitats of East and South Africa. The logistic problems posed in studying mammals in the wooded savannas of West Africa or their ecological analogues in Central Africa take new and as yet partly unsolved problems.

The overriding theme of the symposium was the recognition of the fact that in West Africa wildlife management is primarily concerned with the rational exploitation of its natural resources. This is important when we remember that the populations of most West African nations derive up to 100 per cent of their protein from large and small wildlife species. This volume contains 26 of the 40 papers presented, arranged in four sections which deal with population dynamics and monitoring of wildlife populations, habitat utilisation by wildlife, the effects of fire in East and West African habitats, and an important final section on management, training and education. It is encouraging to notice that 14 of the papers were presented by African wildlife biologists, which demonstrates that training programmes at the local level are now paying dividends. All those interested in the study of wildlife in wooded savanna will find this a valuable source.

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**Australian Endangered Species** by **Derrick Ovington**. Cassell. £15.

**Canadian Endangered Species**, by **Darryl Stewart**. Gage, Toronto.

With the ever-increasing threat of a massive worldwide loss of species it is important to identify those at risk so that measures can be enacted to prevent their extinction. In this regard more and more nations are producing detailed national lists of endangered species and as part of their conservation education campaign producing glossy books on the subject. Derrick Ovington, Director of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service and Chairman of the IUCN Ecology Commission, has written an excellent reference text on Australian wildlife conservation. The species accounts are based on a series of descriptive leaflets issued by the National Parks and Wildlife Service as part of its campaign to promote awareness of endangered species and their protection. 23 mammals, 18 birds and 2 reptile species or subspecies are listed, each with a paragraph on description, breeding, distribution, ecology and conservation, as well as a distribution map of present and former range and a full-page colour drawing. However, the merit of the book lies not so much with these accounts, which the author admits do not include all endangered species, but in the two additional sections describing how Australia's wildlife has arrived at its present predicament and what can be done to reverse the trend: *Australian Scenario of Extinction* includes chapters on *People and Wildlife*, *History of Extinction*, *Wildlife Biology*, and a *Conservation Chronology*, and is a mine of information, and *Conservation Strategy* includes a thorough discussion on *Conservation Action Priorities*. This book will be of interest to both the professional conservationist as well as the general reader.

*Canadian Endangered Species* is the softback edition of a book first published in 1974; as the text has not been updated since then, the species accounts are of limited use for up-to-the-minute information. Written in popular style for the non-specialist, the book is intended as an introductory text. Mammals, Birds, Reptiles and Amphibians, and Fish are listed, plus a section on extinct species. The 32 colour plates include one of the best photographs I have seen of the highly endangered black-footed ferret.

JANE THORNBACK

**The Penitent Butchers**, by **Richard Fitter** and illustrated by **Sir Peter Scott**, £2.65 from the FPS office.

**Interpreting the Environment**, edited by **Grant W. Sharpe**. Wiley, £11.65.

**The Economy of Nature**, by **Robert E. Ricklefs**. Blackwell, £6.75.

Environmental interpretation, as practised in countryside centres, nature trails, urban study centres, town trails etc., is very much an 'in' thing at present and there is a real need for a comprehensive and practical manual on how to do it. This volume is certainly comprehensive. A team of about 20 contributors covers most aspects of environmental interpretation, with major emphasis on the rural situation.

However, the coverage is so broad that it tends to be rather superficial and platitudinous, and not to give sufficient operational detail on how exactly to set up a nature trail or write a descriptive leaflet. Advice, for example to 'arrange facts in logical order, first things first and related things together' is sound but not really necessary. Nor, at the other extreme, does the book deal in any depth with communication theory or tell you how to test the effectiveness of different interpretative techniques against defined objectives. The philosophy, framework and details are essentially American and do not all transfer to other situations. What I am criticising, the fact that the book seems to me to fall halfway between practical detail and academic theory, may seem to others a merit, and there is no doubt that it would be of considerable value to anyone working in countryside interpretation.

Ricklefs' stated aim in *The Economy of Nature* is 'to provide a broad integrated treatment of ecological principles in a book of moderate length', something more than a flimsy paperback and less than a massive monograph. He has reduced the length and complexity of the book by cutting down on literature references and omitting mathematical treatment of ecological theory and also omitting discussion of man's ecological crisis. Chapters 1-9 deal mainly with the description of ecosystem function and structure, including primary production, energy flow and nutrient cycling, and a useful comparison of terrestrial and aquatic environments. The second part, Chapters 10-19, looks at ecosystem function at successive levels of organisation: organism, population and community.

In general the aim is well achieved. The book is clearly and concisely written, with good use of diagrams and photos. There are sufficient references (about 20 per chapter) to allow for follow-up of most of the topics mentioned. Sometimes when a large topic is condensed to one or two pages it may become misleading, e.g. energetic efficiencies in plants. Phrases like 'photosynthesis is an uphill process', 'the guts of a calorimeter', and 'plants are terrible predators', may strike some readers as vivid analogues and others as unnecessary colloquialisms. For anyone wanting a comprehensive, easy-to-read, up-to-date account of ecology, this book would be hard to beat.

PALMER NEWBOULD

**Endangered Birds: Management techniques for preserving endangered species**, edited by **Stanley A. Temple**. Croom Helm, £8.95.

This is the proceedings of a symposium on the latest developments in the management of endangered birds, using manipulative methods to enhance the chances of survival. Breeding species in captivity is a well-tried technique, and its few successes are so far overstated. However, the case of the peregrine, cited here, is an example of how useful such methods can be for building up numbers and perhaps re-establishment in the wild. For some species captive breeding may be the only way of saving them. The Amazon parrots of the Caribbean illustrate the problems that can arise when an aviculturally desirable species is so reduced in numbers that the combination of natural threats and competitive bird-keepers endanger it before legal breeding programmes can be