

Antarctica – The Last Frontier

Richard Laws
 Anglia Television
 Limited/Boxtree, 1989, HB
 £14.95

The screening of a major television series on the Antarctic by Anglia's 'Survival' team is certain to attract much interest and this alone will ensure a wide sale for this book, which is described by Aubry Buxton as the 'mirror and counterpart of the series'. Perhaps the book would never have appeared without the TV series, for Dick Laws has had many other weighty matters on his hands, but fortunately for the public he allowed himself to be persuaded to write this book to complement the series.

But the book can stand alone, complete in itself. Dick Laws is the foremost expert on the Antarctic, with a specialist's knowledge of its biology and the wide-ranging understanding of all its other topics that comes from more than 40 years experience. No one could be better qualified for this task. Furthermore, the book is profusely and beautifully illustrated. The author will not want it to be treated as a coffee-table book, but it is hard to resist the temptation to turn the pages from one fascinating picture to the next. Many of the photographs are by Dick Laws (what a pity there are none of his paintings!), but he has been able to call on some other highly skilled photographers, of whom Rick Price deserves special mention, particularly for his wonderful underwater shots.

The book starts with an introductory chapter on the origins of Antarctica from the breakup of Gondwana, its present structure and climate, and a review of the general environment.

There follows a series of chapters each dealing with one biological system or group, ranging from the Southern Ocean with its all-pervading influence on the region, through the sparse terrestrial life, to the various groups dependent on the marine system, culminating with an account of the seals and whales of the Antarctic.

The final chapter, on Man and the Antarctic, examines the very recent influence of man on that region. Dick Laws's long association with all the organizations important in Antarctic research and policy has enabled him to take a broad and thoughtful view of the road we are currently taking. Because of the complexity of the balance between issues of sovereignty, peace-keeping and resource utilization it is impossible to come to a simple conclusion, either gloomy or sanguine. Perhaps the best we can conclude is that man has made less of a mess running the Antarctic in the last 30 years than he has of other parts of the world.

I commend this book highly to all who want an authoritative, readable and beautifully illustrated book on the Antarctic.

Nigel Bonner.

Wildlife Production Systems. Economic Utilisation of Wild Ungulates

Edited by Robert J. Hudson, K. R. Drew and L. M. Baskin
 Cambridge University Press,
 Cambridge, 1989, 469 pp., HB
 £55.00

This is the third volume in the Cambridge Studies in Applied Ecology and Resource Management. I must declare an interest as one of the members of the Editorial Board, although I

had nothing to do with the production of this particular book. As its subtitle makes clear, it is limited to a consideration of wild ungulates and to their consumptive utilization. This is not to belittle the economic value of non-consumptive use, such as game viewing in national parks, but the editors rightly consider that the more controversial aspect of wildlife exploitation needs airing and it is clear that to extend the coverage further could have been made only at the expense of depth.

The book grew out of papers read at the Fourth International Theriological Congress held in Edmonton, Canada, in August 1985 with additional chapters added to fill gaps. The chapters are grouped into eight sections, each with a short introduction. The first section is a general introduction, which sets the scene with chapters on the history of wildlife exploitation and a summary of present-day international trade in wildlife products. The next section deals with subsistence hunting and takes examples from Australia, the tropics and boreal regions. Recreational and commercial hunting are considered next, again with wide-ranging examples. Three chapters on reindeer follow under the general heading of 'Herding' and lead logically into a section on game ranching, defined here as extensive containment systems. Examples are given from North America and southern Africa. Intensive containment systems, otherwise known as game farming, form the basis of a further section, most of whose chapters deal with deer, although there is one on bison farming in North America. In view of the apparent interchangeability of the terms game ranching and game farming in so much of the literature, it is to be hoped that

the more rigorous terms employed here gain general currency. Some experimental domestications, of moose, muskoxen and musk deer, are considered in the next section. The moose has been tamed, if not domesticated, for so long that its management is hardly experimental. Muskoxen are kept largely for the production of qiviut, which is the fine underwool. The final section considers the environmental and socio-economic aspects of exploitation, an area that is frequently overlooked in many texts on wildlife utilization.

The competence and experience of the authors gives one confidence in the reliability of the text. They can also write well so that the book may be read for pleasure as well as profit. It should appeal to a wide audience, from practical wildlife managers to academics, and I expect it to remain a useful reference book for many years, although it would have been easier to handle if all the references had been gathered together in the back instead of being dispersed at the end of the chapters.
S. K. Eltringham.

Wildlife Management in Sub-Saharan Africa: Sustainable Economic Benefits and Contribution Towards Rural Development

International Foundation for the Conservation of Game
IGF Paris, 727 pp., PB 250FF or \$US45 from CIC, 15 Rue de Téhéran, F-75008, Paris

This book is a bibliographer's nightmare. There is no date of publication, no ISBN number and no apparent publisher, although the address of the IGF is listed on the back cover. There appears not to have been an editor, an omission that is

readily obvious from the chaotic arrangement of the contents. There is not even an introduction explaining what the book is about and one has to search through the pages to discover that it is in fact the proceedings of an international conference, or rather of two conferences, for a 'High-level Conference' was held immediately after what was presumably a low-level one. The meetings took place in Harare, Zimbabwe, between 6 and 12 October 1987. Much of the proceedings are reproduced verbatim, complete with the circumlocutions inherent in welcoming speeches. The discussion at the end of some papers is also given, sometimes in an incoherent fashion with the answers but not the questions to which they are addressed. The individual papers are printed as they were sent in by the authors so that the presentation varies from photocopies of print quality to all sizes of type. One paper has been printed with a reviewer's comments pencilled in the margins. Most of the text is in English but some papers are in French and some in both languages. English-only papers have French summaries and *vice versa*. The book has an attractive, coloured cover but it is flimsily produced and most of the pages fell out of the front of my copy as soon as they were turned. Page 719, which should have listed some of the participants, is blank.

The book, therefore, leaves a lot to be desired physically and in organization but what of its contents? As is so frequently the case with conference reports, it is a mixture of the good and the ephemeral. Its principal virtue is that it gathers together a wealth of information on wildlife utilization that would either have not been published or which would have

been scattered throughout a diversity of journals. It is not easy to extract the nuggets from the present book, for it has no index, although there is a comprehensive table of contents. Had it been more rigorously edited to eliminate the trivia and more professionally produced, it would have had a much bigger impact on conservation thinking. As it is, I suspect that it will be overlooked by people who would benefit from reading it.
S. K. Eltringham.

The Great Migration

Jonathan Scott
Elm Tree Books, London, 1988,
159 pp., HB £25.00

This book describes, in words and pictures, the migrations of the wildebeest and zebra in the Serengeti ecosystem, i.e. the Serengeti National Park, much of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and the surrounding game reserves, including the Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya. The photography is superb and has deepened my inferiority complex over cameras. It is not simply a question of technical excellence for the author has succeeded in capturing on film, dramatic and rare events on the plains. The pictures are vibrant with life so that one can hear the swish of the wildebeest's tail and smell the dust kicked up by their hooves. The reproduction of the photographs is excellent although it is unfortunate that so many of them extend on to another page. This is acceptable with double-page spreads but the presentation loses something when part of the picture is divided off by the central fold.

The book will, no doubt, be purchased primarily for the pictures but it will be a pity if