

# Book reviews

## Management of Large Mammals in African Conservation Areas

Edited by R. Norman Owen-Smith  
HAUM Educational Publishers, Pretoria, 1983, R30·20

## Selecting Wildlife Census Techniques

R.F.H. Collinson  
Monograph 6, Institute of Natural Resources, University of Natal, 1985 R6·00

The problem of over-abundance, real or imagined, of large wild mammals was considered at a conference in Hyannis, Massachusetts, in 1980 and the results were published by Academic Press in *Problems in Management of Locally Abundant Wild Mammals*, edited by Jewell and Holt. This generated considerable interest, particularly in southern Africa, and a follow-up symposium was held in Pretoria in April 1982 to consider, in an African context, the problems raised in Hyannis. The present volume contains the papers presented at the symposium. They are divided into five sections, namely: Goals, Case Studies, Ecological Principles, Management Actions and Socio-Political Considerations. Goals are certainly essential in wildlife management, although rarely stated, and it is good to see the issue debated here even if a clear consensus does not emerge. The section on ecological principles includes some stimulating papers, as does that on management actions. These sections consolidate, rather than reconcile, the differences between the culling-orientated management philosophy of the south and the more *laissez-faire* attitude in East Africa. The final section on socio-political considerations allows several authors to air their prejudices, not least Ian Parker, whose often sensible suggestions are marred by the confusion of precolonial, ecological man with his rifle-toting, vaccinated descendant. Nevertheless, this section should be read by all FFPS members, especially those who think that conservation problems can always be solved by raising funds. In general, the book can be thoroughly recommended, although it is a pity that the decent print of the Foreword and abstracts degenerates into camera-ready type for the chapters. Perhaps it is supposed to signify urgency in publication.

The short booklet by Collinson deals with the relative advantages and disadvantages of most forms of wildlife census techniques. It is an

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excellent introduction that will be of greatest value to students. I cannot see practitioners needing the book. If they do, they ought not to be entrusted with the job.

S.K. Eltringham, Lecturer in Applied Biology at Cambridge University

## Status and Conservation of the World's Seabirds

ICBP Technical Publication No. 2

Edited by J. P. Croxall, P. G. H. Evans and R. W. Schreiber

International Council for Bird Preservation, 1983, £26·90, including postage, from ICBP, 219c Huntingdon Rd, Cambridge CB3 0DL, UK

This magisterial survey of the seabirds of the world is based on an ICBP symposium held in Cambridge in 1982, and, considering the size of the book, nearly 800 pages, ICBP is to be commended for getting it out so quickly. There are 47 papers by more than 80 authors, and every important part of the world is covered, from pole to pole. Seabirds are sensibly defined to include what most people think of as seabirds, i.e. excluding not only phalaropes, grebes and sea ducks, but also those pelicans, cormorants, gulls, terns and skimmers that are primarily or exclusively freshwater birds. Though there is no full index, a systematic list at the beginning directs the reader to the papers that deal with each species.

ICBP being in the conservation business, conservation problems are dealt with fully, both in the status articles and in several purely conservation contributions at the end, on such problems as gillnet fishing. An admirable feature is the summary of the conservation recommendations from the ICBP Seabird Specialist Group, under the headings of surveys, elimination of aliens, establishing and improving reserves, habitat destruction, control of exploitation, education and publicity, legal protection and research. One interesting fact emerging from the Group's work is that the breeding grounds of six seabirds are still unknown: two petrels, two storm petrels, a gull and the Chinese crested tern *Sterna bernsteini*. In addition, despite a century or more of hard searching, the nest of the marbled murrelet has yet to be found in British Columbia.

Let us hope that ICBP will carry on with this

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excellent series and give us other, equally comprehensive, guides to the status and conservation of other groups of birds, and that the Specialist Groups of the IUCN Species Survival Commission will follow suit with plants and the rest of the animals. We must not get the idea that species are only important when they actually get into a Red Data Book.

Richard Fitter

## **The Fragmented Forest: Island Biogeography Theory and the Preservation of Biotic Diversity**

Larry D. Harris

University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1984, PB £10.95, HB £22.95

As the world's natural forests dwindle under modern land-use, so the remaining 'islands' become more important as representatives of mature ecosystems. Sound management is therefore vital, and Larry Harris builds essentially on two themes to advocate his approach. First, that for forest islands to function independently of their surroundings, 'their size might need to be so large that their conservation would be outside the realm of existing conditions or current political and economic restraints', and second, that since forest conservation is aimed primarily at the future, 'we must follow procedures that will ensure the sustained development of replacement stands'.

In a very timely and cogent work, Harris draws together scientific information about the fir forests of the Cascade mountains in Washington and Oregon, and uses it to evaluate the utility of island biogeography theory as a guide to forest management. He opens with a detailed description of the forest community, and draws the reader into a careful evaluation of alternative management approaches, looking at such factors as island area requirements for specified flora and fauna, island size versus island number, and inter-island distance. In the final section of the book, he gives his prescription: the Archipelago Approach, involving long-rotation islands. These are permanently undisturbed areas, surrounded by buffers of managed forest that are cut sequentially in cake-slices to maximize the average age difference between the sections. He also elaborates

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upon the uses of riparian strips as corridors for genetic flow between stands.

For me, a lot of the importance of *The Fragmented Forest* lies in its heuristic value. Much more than in North America, the forests of the developing world are being exploited for short-term profits, and there is powerful ammunition in this book for those whose role it is to persuade governments to aim natural community management at perpetual benefits. It should be on every conservation biologist's bookshelf.

Michael Kavanagh, *World Wildlife Fund—Malaysia*

## **Threatened Birds of Africa and Related Islands**

The ICBP/IUCN Red Data Book, Part 1

N.J. Collar and S.N. Stuart

International Council for Bird Preservation, 1985, £24.00, including postage, from ICBP, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, CB3 0DL, UK

It would be very easy to write several pages of praise for the new bird *Red Data Book* (RDB) and I have absolutely no doubt that many such reviews will appear. However, a function of a review is also to bring out any points for discussion, even if there are no criticisms. Firstly, I must emphasize that this is essential reference for even the smallest library and I have nothing but unqualified praise for the authors.

The introduction claims that ICBP was the first (1922) 'global organization to be set up for wildlife conservation'. This is a quibbling point for members of the FFPS, since we always claim to be the first (1903) international wildlife conservation society—the British Empire in those days covered more countries than did ICBP. More seriously though, there are a number of changes in the presentation of the RDB which are noteworthy. Subspecies have been excluded, and while I believe this to be a fully justified decision on taxonomic grounds, it does mean that a number of interesting populations have probably been excluded.

A problem with all the IUCN (and ICBP) *Red Data Books* is inconsistent use of categories for degrees of threat. To start with, in this present volume, it is difficult to find the definitions, and a

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