

discussion of the nature of scientific theories and the relationship between prediction and explanation the author makes his own position quite clear and sets the tone for the following book. The author is interested in predicting things and his approach is purely instrumentalistic. He asserts that 'There is no good explanation for body size relations . . . and those who crave explanations will find the approach wanting.' The rest of us will cheer.

Having laid out the region he proposes to survey and the tools he proposes to use he pauses to provide a short mathematical primer. This should not be necessary; but it remains regrettably so and it is useful to have it in the book, though perhaps it would have been better placed in an appendix. The primer deals with power relationships, logarithms, regression and correlation and it makes illuminating comments about the application of linear regression in the study of size relations. A paragraph on the dimensions of physical quantities and the method of dimensional analysis would have improved this chapter even though the relevant information is tabulated in Appendix 1.

Throughout the book the quantitative arguments are presented very stylishly; they are tidily contained in tables and the degree of detail shown seems to me to be ideal for a text directed at undergraduates. What makes the tables particularly valuable is that at the end of each table there is a slogan printed in bold type that acts as a mnemonic for the significance of the relationship revealed by the algebraic argument. The topics discussed include physiological correlates of size, locomotion, ingestion, growth and reproduction, mass flow, animal abundance, and allometric simulation models. Throughout, the exposition is clear and is governed by the empirical facts of the relationships investigated. The dominance of empirical investigation is stressed everywhere, as revealed by the following quotation: 'Academics can scarcely cease the search for fundamental scientific regularities, and biologists have long been trained to ask the unanswerable question, why? However, a century and a half's explanation of the scaling of metabolism has not brought us closer to a definitive answer and may have seriously impeded research by stressing the need to explain a non-existent regularity, the surface law, rather than the need to test it.'

This book is an excellent introduction to an important topic in modern biology, and it deserves the wide critical approval it has already obtained.

J. G. Ollason

*Department of Zoology, University of Aberdeen,  
Aberdeen AB9 2TN, Scotland, UK.*

## BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

RUBELI, K. 1986. *Tropical rain forest in South-east Asia: a pictorial journey*. Tropical Press Sdn. Bhd., Kuala Lumpur. 248 pages. ISBN 967-73-0013-X. Price M\$55.00 including p. & p. (available from Malayan Nature Society, PO Box 10750, 50724 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia).

This beautiful book is more than just an adornment for the naturalist's coffee table. Over 400 superb photographs have been augmented by an intelligently written 20,000-word text which together 'lead the reader on a journey through the tropical rain forests of South-east Asia: first by way of the rivers, then overland in the lowland forest with its profusion of plant and animal life, then on through caves, up to the mossy forest and mountain peaks, and finally to glimpse a little of the lives of the hunting-and-gathering people for whom the forest is home'. Ken Rubeli is to be congratulated on producing such an attractive and readable volume, and Tropical Press for producing it so well and at such a reasonable price. Let us hope that it can play some part in helping to preserve what it illustrates so well: the beauty and fascination of the tropical rain forest.

Adrian G. Marshall

*Institute of South-east Asian Biology, University of Aberdeen  
Aberdeen AB9 2TN, Scotland, UK.*