

Book reviews

It is difficult to take issue with any of Horwood's points because, with the exception of the last chapter, he takes care not to express any subjective opinions whatsoever. Nonetheless, I did think some of his statements were slightly misleading, and would have benefited from further qualification. For example, while he is right to say that the commercial whaling moratorium was imposed 'even though it had been shown that reduced quotas could be agreed . . . and that some species could be counted in hundreds of thousands of animals', I felt Horwood could also have pointed out that the real bone of contention is not so much stock size, as whether it is actually possible to have a management regime that is profitable as well as sustainable. The general consensus at present—amongst non-whaling nations, at least—is that it is not. Besides, there is still an enormous amount of debate over the best way to calculate the likes of stock sizes and recruitment rates, and so, although there is universal agreement that, in principle, quotas can be set, and sustainable yields can be taken, just what those quotas, or those sustainable yields, should be is far less clear. That is the reason for the moratorium. Despite the fact that many people—myself included—would like to see commercial whaling end indefinitely, the moratorium is not, as Horwood implies, an unconditional, permanent ban, but a pause pending a comprehensive assessment of whale stocks.

However, these are relatively minor reservations, and probably rather unfair. Horwood's intention is not to debate the merits or otherwise of the moratorium decision, nor is it to consider the economic aspects of whaling. It is merely to describe, in as comprehensive a manner as possible, the sei whale's population biology, and so provide a factual base on which the reader can build his own opinions as to the most suitable of the management options available to us. In this, the author succeeds very well. *The Sei Whale* is a largely excellent reference book, and one that should be regularly consulted by all those concerned with the conservation and management of cetaceans.

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Rangelands: A Resource Under Siege

P. J. Joss, P. W. Lynch and O. B. Williams (editors)

Cambridge University Press, 1987, 634 pp., HB £55.00, \$79.50

This volume contains the proceedings of the Second International Rangeland Congress held in Adelaide, South Australia, on 13–18 May 1984. There were over 500 registrants from 42 countries and, partly because of the large number of participants, the meeting was divided into 13 symposia, which are published here in 13 corresponding sections. Only a selection of the 350 or so papers are published in full. These are the invited papers and the plenary addresses. The remainder are presented as unrefereed synopses, whose authors are urged by the organizers to publish as full scientific papers in appropriate journals. I am not sure that this is a satisfactory arrangement as there is no way of telling which contribution is a refereed paper and which a synopsis, apart from those in three sections where the convenors distinguish them in their introductory remarks. It is likely that many of the synopses will enter the literature as if they are orthodox papers. This is not an easy book in which to find one's way around for the table of contents lists only the section titles and there is no subject index. It is, therefore, a book to dip into and not to read from cover to cover. I do not claim to have read every word, although I suspect that I shall do so in time. Perhaps the section on 'Conservation and Wildlife' will interest *Oryx* readers the most, but many of the sections contain articles of interest to the conservationist.

With such a large number of contributions it is inevitable that the quality varies. Some say very little or report trivial results and would probably never have been written but for the need to prepare something to justify attendance at the conference. Conversely, there are many valuable and interesting papers for which I am pleased to have this book, although I doubt whether I would pay £55 for it. I would, however, encourage a university library to acquire a copy.

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