

# Book reviews

presented text. A good book and good value for money.

Pat Morris, Lecturer in Zoology, Royal Holloway College, University of London

## Threatened Swallowtail Butterflies of the World (The IUCN Red Data Book)

N. Mark Collins and Michael G. Morris  
IUCN, Gland, Switzerland, and Cambridge, UK, HB £18.00

This 400-page volume includes five major sections: the biology of papilionids and their basic conservation requirements, distribution and status, critical faunas analysis, trade, and a review of threatened species; two appendices: swallowtails in threatened categories, and species requiring further research; an index; and eight colour plates illustrating 40 of the threatened taxa.

The informative first section is followed by a 100-page encyclopaedia, with entries for all 573 recognized species. Such a truly systematic approach lays the foundation for the unique qualities of this book. To quote the authors, this 'is the first worldwide assessment of the conservation needs of any invertebrate group, and the first Red Data Book to be based on a published consideration of every species in the taxon under review'. Bold claims—fully vindicated by the text. Their approach is vital for two major reasons: first, it makes such a work invaluable *in its own right*—Collins and Morris is not merely a *review*, it is a primary reference source. Secondly, the comprehensive approach permits quantification, such as the critical faunas analysis presented in Part 3, which indicates a 'top 5' list of Indonesia, Philippines, China, Brazil and Madagascar. Between them, these countries possess more than half the world's swallowtail butterfly species—including 110 not found anywhere else. Clearly, any swallowtail conservation strategy that fails to involve these five nations cannot be effective. One wonders what sort of list would emerge from similar treatment of a variety of plant as well as animal groups—'critical FF-analysis'.

Such considerations pose a further question: have those organizations responsible for global conservation programmes already done this work—or is species conservation essentially *ad hoc*? Of course, complete objectivity is never possible, and reality is often overwhelmingly

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complex. Nonetheless, I believe that it is essential to develop methods that allow as much objectivity as possible, and reduce complexities to manageable proportions. What I like so much about this latest Red Data Book is that it offers a way forward from the apparently random approach to so much conservation planning.

If it should be contended that time is too short to make such global assessments, and the data are too hard to find, then one need only point to this remarkable book, completed in only two years. In fact, there is no lack of data—it is just a matter of getting on with it, extracting, collating, organizing, analysing. Now we even have cheap computers to help us. Is there, then, some lack of will—are we frightened to take a global view, to make choices, make rational decisions, for fear of having to put our own pet projects into perspective, or even into limbo?

I consider this book to be an outstanding achievement. On first picking it up, I was struck by a moment's egotistical sadness—why hadn't I written this thing myself! *Threatened Swallowtail Butterflies of the World* represents a watershed in our approach to species conservation strategy.

R. I. Vane-Wright, Department of Entomology, British Museum (Natural History)

## The Wilderness Guardian—A Practical Guide to Fieldwork Related to Wildlife Conservation

Timothy Corfield

Published by the David Sheldrick Wildlife Appeal, PO Box 48177, Nairobi, Kenya, and available in UK from the Eden Wildlife Trust, 10 Oriel Hill, Camberley, Surrey GU15 2JW, UK, £15 plus £1.50 for postage and packing

This is one book that I hope never to see on a conservationist's bookshelf, but rather in his pocket or on the dashboard of his landrover, for this is an eminently practical volume.

Dedicated to the memory of David Sheldrick, first warden of Tsavo East National Park, Kenya, it is an encyclopaedic compilation of the diverse skills and knowledge a game warden is expected to possess. The information on wildlife is specific to Africa, but the book would be of value to wardens and park rangers in any country. The natural history section is a curious selection—26 pages on insects, one-and-a-half pages on snakes and

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one page on fishes—but is designed to fill gaps left by other books. If, however, you should need to build, plumb and wire a park headquarters or house, tie a bowline, age a hippopotamus (by its teeth) or anaesthetize a warthog—simply enquire within.

The book is divided into 16 chapters, which cover the basics of: building and construction; workshop and vehicle maintenance; office and staff organization; planes and flying; plumbing, drainage and waterworks; road building and river crossings; simple surveying techniques; camping and bushcraft; a collection of useful tips for home and workshop; East African natural history (including a useful key to Acacias); medical, first aid and veterinary matters; guns, hunting and anti-poaching; radio communication; and the capture and care of wild animals.

The main drawback is that a single volume is not sufficient to cover the subjects, but references are given. It also presupposes a large measure of common sense on behalf of the reader—some of the instructions, if followed by a novice without expert tuition, could be downright dangerous. Some warnings are given—the short section on blasting with dynamite or gelignite begins, 'This is not recommended for those without experience . . .' An expert in any of the fields covered might quibble about minor points; for example, some would object to incising venomous snake bites, even—as stipulated—as a last ditch attempt to save life; and inexpert use of a tourniquet can do more harm than good, but this does not detract from the value of bringing together such a mass of information between the covers of one manageable book. It will serve as an invaluable aid to anyone living and working in wilderness areas.  
*Ian Redmond, wildlife biologist and photographer*

## **Naturalised Mammals of the World**

Sir Christopher Lever

Published by the Longman Group Ltd, Harlow, Essex, 1985.  
£40.00

I have had this book on my desk since it was published and I have found it an invaluable work of reference. Inevitably, with a publication that endeavours to be comprehensive, every time I come across an obscure reference to any mammalian introduction in some out-of-the-way

corner of the globe, I check to see if it is mentioned. Almost without exception Sir Christopher has ferretted them all out. This will be, without question, a standard work for many years to come, and invaluable wherever you live—from the Solomons to Newfoundland—an accurate account of man's stupidity.

*John A. Burton*

## **The Giant Panda**

Wang Zongyi

*China Pictorial* in 1984, distributed by China International Book Trading Corp., and obtainable in Britain from Collets, Denington Estate, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 2QT, UK, 120 pp, PB £9.50 plus £1.00 postage and packing

To this Jasmine-tea Table Book no fewer than 23 Chinese photographers have contributed. It is lavishly illustrated and well produced. There are 103 pictures and 12 pages of text. The words tell us about the animal, its habitat, its problems in relating to human beings, its propagation in captivity and its role as a political envoy. The photographs, however, dominate the volume and many are stunning. They show different aspects of panda life, even though they are mostly, as would be expected, of animals in captivity. The illustrations also embrace the panda's dramatic habitat, animal neighbours like the golden monkey and the takin (a shaggy highland four-foot) and a selection of woodland and alpine flowers. The shot of copulating wild pandas should have been attributed to George Schaller from whose still it is reproduced.

*Jeffery Boswall, BBC Natural History Unit, Bristol, UK*

## **Sex in Nature**

Chris Catton and James Gray

Croom Helm, 1985, 224 pp, HB £12.95

A broad overview of sexual strategies in plants and animals, aimed at the interested amateur. It is lavishly illustrated, in colour and in black and white.

## **The Countryside in Winter**

Brian Jackman, illustrated by Bruce Pearson

Hutchinson, 1985, 160 pp, HB £12.95

A celebration of Britain's most underrated season by Brian Jackman, FFPS Council Member and Travel Writer of the Year 1982, and Bruce

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