

Book reviews

Tsuga forresti. Eight flowers of the genus *Primula*, nine species of the genus *Rhododendron*, and four *Magnolias* are illustrated.

Pride of place in the book is given to the Chinese dove tree *Davidia involucrata*, being one of the very few species accorded the highest of three grades of legal protection under the 'Regulations for the Protection of Wild Plant Reserves of the People's Republic of China'. In all, 354 Chinese plant species are accorded one of three grades of protection, 42 of them being found in western Sichuan. The photographs are captioned in English with scientific names. The brief text is in English, Chinese and Tibetan.

If you wish to acquire a copy of this book, you could try writing to Yang Si-Yi, the Director, Office of Foreign Affairs, Chengdu Branch, Academia Sinica, PO Box 416, Chengdu, Sichuan, PRC.

Red Data Book of the People's Republic of Bulgaria: Volume 1, Plants

Managing Editor, Velcho Velchev

Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria, 1984, 448 pp. Bulgarian with Russian and English summaries, many line drawings, coloured paintings and maps, 56 colour photos; £25 plus postage and packing from Collets, Denington Estate, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 2QT, UK

Red Data Book of the People's Republic of Bulgaria: Volume 2, Animals

Botiu Botev and Tzolo Peshev

Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria, 1985, 184 pp. Bulgarian with Russian and English summaries, many paintings, line drawings and maps 54 colour photos; £17.50 plus postage and packing from Collets, Denington Estate, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 2QT, UK

These two rather splendid volumes are in the tradition of the 20 or so *Red Data Books* produced in the Soviet Union (where they cover not only the whole country and most of the republics, but also smaller administrative units such as

Yakutia and north-east Siberia and the Murmansk region).

Although written in Bulgarian, it is possible to enjoy the books with the aid of the illustrations and maps, symbols and scientific names, plus, of course, the tightly packed two-page English summaries in each part.

Among the 763 higher plants listed, no fewer than 124 are endemic to Bulgaria. Of the 763, 31 are already extinct in Bulgaria, 158 are endangered, and 574 are considered rare.

About 20 vertebrate zoologists have contributed to Volume 2; there are accounts of 24 fishes, 14 herptiles, 100 birds and 19 mammals. Thus, there are 157 vertebrate species in Bulgaria that are either extinct already as breeders or are held to be 'threatened' or 'rare'. The locations of 56 present or proposed protected areas are plotted on a map.

It is good to see in colour a variety of Balkan flowers and, among the animals, the rarely photographed eastern spadefoot toad, leopard snake, demoiselle crane and long-legged buzzard.

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

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