

# Book reviews

## **Environmental Policies: An International Review**

Edited by Chris Park

Croom Helm, Beckenham, Kent, 1985, £22.50

It may show my lack of sophistication, but books that use words like 'ecocentrism' and 'technocentrism' really drive me up the wall. When I read a sentence like 'the technocentric continuum described by O'Riordan emerged in the 1980s, with the political consensus co-opting environmentalism so that they can retain control over the transition from cornucopianism to accommodation, thereby repelling any attempts at any more radical solutions to the growth-environmental damage-social justice drama', I want to telephone the editor of 'Pseudos Corner' in *Private Eye*. *Environmental Policies: An International Review* is not totally dominated by such unintelligible (at least to me) jargon, but there is a fair smattering.

In substance, the book consists of an introductory chapter, seven chapters on environmental policies in the United States, Canada, EEC, United Kingdom, Australia, India and Japan (one chapter on each), and a final chapter entitled 'Towards a Global Environmental Strategy'. Provided one can wade through the jargon, the seven middle chapters do provide a useful overview of environmental policies in the countries concerned. Because of the enormity of the subject area and the limitations of space (the chapters are about 30 pages in length), the treatment of specific problems is inevitably rather superficial. Nevertheless, the reader is given some insight into the historical context from which environmental policies have developed, and a brief, if rather generalized, description of the particular problems facing each chosen region and the policy framework within which attempts to solve these problems are structured.

The chapter on India is particularly interesting because it is the only developing country covered by the book, and a recognition of the importance of environmental protection is much more entrenched in the traditional Indian view of life than in the West. A review of environmental policies in one or two other developing countries with different cultures would have added greatly to the value of the book. *Environmental Policies* will be 198

useful to those in need of introductory reading on the countries covered, but they will need to look elsewhere for a really detailed analysis.

*Simon Lyster, Honorary Secretary of the Falklands Islands Foundation and author of International Wildlife Law*

## **Immigrant Killers: Introduced Predators and the Conservation of Birds in New Zealand**

Carolyn King

Oxford University Press, 1984, 224 pp, £29.50

Dr Carolyn King's fascinating and extremely readable book (which, incidentally, carries the recommendation of the ICBP and WWF) covers a much wider field than the title seems to suggest, since it not only traces the introduction and impact of predators (including man) to New Zealand, but also describes the indigenous fauna before their arrival, and explains why the various endemic birds—which had hitherto evolved in a predator-free environment—were defenceless against these exotic intruders. There is also a chapter describing the effect of introduced predators on the avifauna of Lord Howe Island, Hawaii, Britain and Australia.

Since the arrival in New Zealand of Polynesian colonists (who brought with them kuri dogs and kiore rats) some 1200 years ago, and of European settlers (who initially imported cats, dogs, rats and domestic stock, and subsequently mustelids and a variety of grazing and browsing herbivores) since 1769, some 55 species and subspecies of native birds have disappeared from the two main islands.

Contrary to popular belief, however, Dr King argues persuasively that the main reason for the extinction of birds in New Zealand has not been simple predation by such carnivores as cats and stoats nor by rodents such as rats, but rather a combination of the reduction (by some 70 per cent) of the total area of native forest; the dissection (by man) and degradation (by introduced browsing mammals such as deer and possums) of the remaining forest; and the introduction of predators—including man, first as hunter for food, then as museum collector, and latterly as habitat despoiler. 'There is no doubt,' Dr King concludes, 'that the number one immigrant killer of modern times is man himself.'

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My only criticisms of this well-documented book are reserved for the publishers for producing such a lurid and inappropriate dust-jacket, for the poor quality of some of the monochrome illustrations, and for placing such a high price (even in this inflationary age) on a book of 224 pages.

The highest compliment I can pay Dr King is to say that I wish her thought-provoking book had been published in time for me to have read it before completing my own *Naturalized Mammals of the World*.

Christopher Lever

## **Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance**

Stephen Herrero

Winchester Press, New Jersey, 1985, 287 pp, \$14.95

When bears come close to humans, potentially harmful interactions become a problem—for the bears as much as for people. Particularly in certain American national parks, the 'bear problem' became acute during the 1970s, with large numbers of visitors regularly coming into bear country and many bears being positively attracted to key areas such as campsites and hiking trails. The bears began raiding camps and ripping open cars to get at food inside. There were also some gruesome and highly publicized human fatalities, often resulting from people startling bears (especially females with cubs) or crowding too close to them in order to feed or photograph them. Herrero describes his research into this developing problem of wildlife management and proposes some possible solutions. Keeping campsites scrupulously clean and proper disposal of refuse are obvious ways of not encouraging bears to become campsite scroungers, and perhaps should be mandatory anyway. Killing or deporting ursine camp followers is less desirable, especially in a national park. Stiff penalties for feeding bears by the roadside might help too—if people were persuaded to stop. However, seeing bears is one of the pleasures of visiting a national park; the difficulty is to control the behaviour of people towards them. One of Herrero's illustrations shows the hand-feeding of a wild bear, and I have seen holidaymakers posing their children beside a wild bison for a good family snapshot, and children playing beside a wild alligator. The so-called 'bear

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problem' is actually a people problem too. Herrero discusses both aspects and also shows how very different the grizzly and black bear are in their behaviour towards humans. This leads him to propose different strategies for us to follow if attacked. In one case you must be totally passive and play dead, in the other you should fight back: a tricky decision to make in the 1.5 seconds before a charging bear reaches you!

This is an interesting book, perhaps an important one for those who regularly hike and camp in North America. For a little while I was put off from doing either. Bear attacks are bad news, literally, and can generate disproportionate hysteria, but a sense of proportion should be retained; the chances of being killed by a bear, even in the most likely places, are less than one in a million. Being struck by lightning is far more likely. History shows that we can easily solve the bear problem by exterminating bears; peacefully coexisting with them is more difficult, but perhaps more appropriate, especially in national parks.

Pat Morris, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, University of London

## **Galapagos: A Natural History Guide**

M.H. Jackson

University of Calgary Press, 1985, XIII+283 pp, US \$17.50 (outside Canada) + \$3.00 postage, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 1N4

Also available from Bradt Publications, 41 Norcroft Road, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks SL9 0LA, UK, £14.95

Despite the recent flood of Galapagos books, this latest one covers a somewhat different field from the rest and so meets a somewhat different need. It is neither a slim pocket guide such as M.P. Harris's *Field Guide to the Birds of the Galapagos*, nor yet an authoritative compilation of scientific information written by experts on their specialist subjects, such as *Galapagos* in the Pergamon Press's *Key Environment* series. Mr Jackson's guide book falls somewhere between the two, and very properly draws freely on these and other sources. It is a substantial soft-backed volume dealing with the historical background, the environmental setting, conservation problems and information for visitors, as well as eight substantial chapters on the various divisions of wildlife (plants, reptiles, seabirds etc.). There is

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