

and mis-reporting catches. When fisheries officers appear for control and gear inspection, nets simply get cut off (which makes it even worse for fish, seabirds and sea mammals that drown in the “ghost nets” later). Overall, I find that the author, an American, might have a tendency to blame the Spaniards and Russians too much here. Instead, a mention and description of the role that the Vladivostok-based Russian fisheries plays, acting worldwide, could have made the book even better.

The thorough understatement of environmental damage done by coastal and offshore fishery must be of concern to any informed naturalist. The author neglects to address the destructive fishery method from draggers (“seafloor dredging”), which is, for instance, estimated to damage an area larger than that lost through deforestation in the tropics. There is no mentioning of fisheries gear polluting beaches worldwide, or “ghost nets” which float around in the world’s oceans for years (eventually, they will sink, but only the fish know whether they will ever rot). Sensitive by-catch topics such as the endangered Short-tailed Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) caught by freezer-longliners fishing off Alaska are not mentioned, and certainly there is no reporting of the numerous sea turtles, sharks, dolphins, porpoises, seabirds, moon fishes and many other species suffering and dying for the sake of high quality fish. In times of environmentalism, that might be seen as a short coming of this book. Although the occurrence of a “black catch” is somewhat mentioned, one has to read that shrimp fisheries has apparently almost no by-catch. The reader has to keep his/her breath when McCloskey mentions “overpopulations” of Sockeye and seals; 50 000 seals are described as an “overpopulation” rather than victims in a potential by-catch problem. No wonder, the author identifies clearly from the “fishermen’s side”, blames Greenpeace, and does not place fisheries in the overall context of the environment; instead, he mostly focuses on economical and descriptive aspects of fisheries. In this regard, the author’s presentation of Chile’s fishery development lacks sensitivity to the well-proven and negative effects of over-commercialization. On the other side, his won-

derful and detailed presentation of the effects from the Exxon Valdez Oilspill for Alaska and its island communities compensate for the previous short-comings. A remarkable link is shown why the prizes of the Japanese Salmon market are driven by cycles of the Japanese Salmon runs, and thus dictate the Alaskan Salmon fisheries. McCloskey gets closer to the heart of the fisheries problem when outlining that improved efficiency and introduction of very light, and therefore allowing for longer, plastic nets has contributed to the current overfishing crisis.

In the numerous and fascinating book chapters the author also emphasizes and describes that there exists such a thing as severe overfishing: Snow Crab in Alaska; Cod, Flounder and Squid in Newfoundland; and Halibut off West America. He blames governmental mismanagement and elaborates nicely throughout the text that there is also conflict of interest among fishermen on these topics; e.g., unions, and small scale fisheries vs. industrialized trawlers. In the context of governmental mismanagement, New Zealand’s Orange Roughy, a prime example of overfishing and disastrous fisheries management, could have been mentioned, too. The book would have gotten even better when topics such as Native Fishery Rights, North Sea Fisheries and Krill Fisheries in the Antarctic would have been included. The map of the Grand Banks lacks the French Fisheries zone around St. Pierre and Miquelon; but the reader will appreciate that this book has a very detailed index, which allows that it can serve as a valid source of references, too.

The book ends with a well-written and conclusive section on global fisheries and policy. The author quotes from one of his many interviews with experts: “Gathering fishery statistics is an art in probability”. That statement makes it clear that, currently, there can be no sustainable world fisheries. Due to the many topics covered, I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and got literally “hooked”.

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MISCELLANEOUS

How the Earthquake Bird Got its Name and Other Tails of an Unbalanced Nature

H. H. Shugart. 2004. Yale University Press, New Haven, USA. 227 pages.

What do the following five birds, four mammals and one marsupial have in common: Ivory-billed Woodpeckers, penguins, packrats, Bachman’s Warblers, Leadbeater’s Possums, Red-billed Queleas, Beavers, Giant Moas, Gray Wolves, and European Rabbits? Several are extinct, a few are very numerous, some are common, and others are rare. They all have been chosen by Shugart who, with charm and panache, intro-

duces the reader to a wide range of ecological concepts under the rubric of animal parables.

Shugart, the W. W. Corcoran Professor and Director, Global Environmental Change Program at the University of Virginia, presents nine ecological concepts: forest gap dynamics, niche theory, paleoecology, ecological disturbance, migration, keystone species, island biogeography, domestication, and invasive species. These ecological principles are not presented in a “pristine” form, but are embedded within the context of human transformation of the earth’s landscapes and

how these transformations relate to animal extinctions and explosions.

Shugart introduces each concept with an animal story that sets the stage for an intelligent and entertaining journey through a mélange of natural and human history. Did you know that the word “penguin” comes from two Welsh words? *Pen* is the Welsh word for head and *gwyn* is Welsh for white. Penguins do not have white heads, but were actually named for the great, guano-whitened headlands on an island near Newfoundland (Funk Island). The birds of interest, however, were not penguins as we know them from the Antarctic region, but actually auks, of which the now extinct Great Auk was the one most familiar to the sailors of the day. The Great Auks were named penguins long before European mariners misnamed the similar looking but unrelated penguins of the southern and Antarctic waters. Being from Newfoundland, I found this little tidbit delightful. This is typical of the manner in which Shugart expertly weaves natural and human history into an attractive and colourful mosaic.

The packrat and its middens introduce the reader to the world of paleoecology, of the archival nature of tree rings, ice cores, and pollen deposits that reveals a dynamic and ever-changing earth. The African grassland Red-billed Quail, apparently the most common bird on earth, initiates the reader to a marvelous treatment of bird migration that is sobered by an account of the extinction of the once numerous Passenger Pigeon. Shugart’s account of the Wolf (*Canus lupus*) introduces us to the domesticated wolf or dog (*Canus domesticus*) and the history of animal domestication by our ancestors. To see how humans have radically

altered natural landscapes without metal or modern devices, one has only to turn to the domesticated grazers.

If you are looking for support of notions such as “the balance of nature” or “unspoiled, pristine wilderness” you will be disappointed. Shugart explicitly eschews such notions. His objective is to “provide an alternative view, to give insights into the dynamically changing nature of ecosystems and the implications of this dynamism for our stewardship of the planet” (page 2). According to Shugart, the only constant in nature is change. For him, planetary management or stewardship is the human vocation; a vocation that is defined, not by hubris, but rather by an acknowledgement of the long and continuing history of human alteration of planetary ecosystems, and the need for intentional and responsible human action. It is within this paradigm that we must understand the myriad of conservation and ethical challenges that face us.

This work will pique the interest of all naturalists. Shugart’s writing is far from being pedantic or stogy. He writes with passion, charm and clarity about a subject that has no doubt become a vocation. A wealth of original ecological research is synthesized in a delightfully accessible manner that relates to our proverbial interest in the wax and wane of animal species. Why are some species abundant and others rare? Why does one species respond positively to human influence, while other species meet extirpation or extinction? The detailed and helpful notes serve well the interested reader who wishes to pursue further research.

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Zoology

Amphibians and Reptiles of the Bay Islands, and Cayos Cochinos, Honduras. By J. McCranie, L. Wilson and G. Köhler. 2005 Bibliomania! P.O. Box 58355, Salt Lake City, Utah 84158. 224 pages. U.S. \$29.95 Cloth.

Amphibians and Reptiles: Status and Conservation in Florida. 2005. By W. Menshaka and K. Babbitt. P.O. Box 9542, Melbourne, Florida USA. 32902-9542. 334 pages. U.S. \$66.50.

Bird Coloration – Volume 1. By G. Hill and McGraw. 2005. Harvard University Press, 100 Maple Ridge Drive, Cumberland Rhode Island 02864-1769. 544 pages. U.S. \$95.

* **Birds of New Brunswick: An Annotated list. (Oiseaux du Nouveau-Brunswick: une liste commentée.)** By David Christie et al. 2005. New Brunswick Museum, Monograph No. 10, 277 Douglas Avenue, Saint John, New Brunswick E2K 1E5. 84 pages. not illustrated, no price available.

Birds of Ontario: Habitat Requirements, Limiting Factors and Status (Nonpasserines, Waterfowl through Cranes). By A. Sandilands. 2005. UBC Press, 2029 West Mall, Vancouver, British Columbia V5T 1Z2. 366 pages. \$95.

Birds of Two Worlds – The Ecology and Evolution of Migration. Edited by Russell Greenberg and Peter P. Marra. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2715 North Charles Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21218-4363. £15.50 Cloth.

* **Blue Grouse – their Biology and Natural History.** By F. Zwickel and J. Bendall. 2005. NRC Research Press, M-55, National Research Council, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0R6. 284 pages. \$69.95 Paper.

Crows. By Candace Savage. 2005. Greystone Books, Suite 500, 720 Bathurst Street, Toronto Ontario M5S 2R4. 120 pages. \$27 Cloth.

Dragonflies of Sussex. By T. A. Belden et al. 2004. NHBS Ltd., 2-3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon, Great Britain TQ9 5XN. £7.95 Paper.