

Book Reviews

ZOOLOGY

Amphibian Decline: An Integrated Analysis of Multiple Stressor Effects

Edited by Greg Linder, Sherry K. Krest, Donald W. Sparling. 2003. SETAC North America, 1010 North 12th Avenue, Pensacola, Florida 32501-3367 USA. xxi + 345 pages. U.S.\$98 Cloth.

This volume contains presentations at the Workshop on the Global Decline of Amphibian Populations sponsored jointly by the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) and The Johnson Foundation 1-23 August 2001 at Racine, Wisconsin. Fifteen papers are included as 10 chapters, one with A-B and another with A-E designations for no apparent reason.

Canadian data and perspective on the problem of declines are not neglected. Of the 35 contributing authors listed, 31 are from the United States but four are Canadian: Christine Bishop (Canadian Wildlife Service, Delta, British Columbia), David Cunningham ("freelance", Victoria, British Columbia), Martin Ouellet (Redpath Museum, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec), Bruce D. Pauli (Canadian Wildlife Service, Hull, Quebec). Ouellet is one of nine coauthors of Chapter 6 "Biotic Factors in Amphibian Population Declines", and Bishop, Cunningham, and Pauli are half of the six coauthors of Chapter 7 "Physical Habitat and Its Alteration: A Common Ground for Exposure to Environmental Stressors".

None of the individual chapters is a particularly easy read and their results or conclusions often are neither clear-cut nor universal in their application. However, collectively, they effectively and repeatedly bring out the complications in separating climatic, chemical pol-

lutant, and biotic pressures, many of which doubtlessly combine to produce documented or supposed losses or declines. The texts are heavily laden with flow and modelling in 18 figure diagrams, 18 tables, 5 matrices and even two "test boxes" to visually present concepts and consequences. Each chapter has its own bibliography.

The concluding summary chapter effectively stresses the continuing, unresolved nature of the problems, but, in an inevitable rather self-congratulatory manner, arrives at the conclusion that this workshop was vital to promoting a much-needed exchange of expertise on various aspects of real and potential amphibian declines and that it has created a network for further discussion and exchange. Although one could argue that this was happening anyway, the workshop did usefully focus discussions and the book spreads the state of knowledge. It is useful both for what research has been done and for what future approaches might be productive. One can hardly disagree with the fundamental conclusion that further sharing of information as it develops will be essential to adequately defining future measures. If, eventually, there ever will be effective conservation of the world amphibian fauna it will depend on a better understanding of the causes and reality of the declines.

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Birds of Africa: From Seabirds to Seed-eaters

By Chris and Tilde Stuart. 1999. MIT Press, Five Cambridge Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. 176 pages. U.S. \$29.95 Cloth.

This is an attractive book that appears to be intended as a typical "coffee table" volume. It is large in size (22 × 28 cm), profusely illustrated and very well laid out, with between 2 and 9 illustrations on each two-page spread. The plates themselves range from full page to quite tiny (under 4 cm²).

The text is presented in 12 chapters plus an introduction, species list, and index. Each chapter is devoted to a group of bird families with some feature in common. Thus we have "Birds of the Oceans", "Birds of Inland Waters and the Coastline", "LBJS", and so on. Chapters then deal with each family in turn (grouped

in the sequence of their common names), giving the number of species that occur in Africa together with a brief account of the family characteristics, and something about a sampling of the species. Occasionally there are boxes which treat a particular topic in some detail; for example, "The Dilemma of Island Birds".

The main body of the text enlivens the chronicle of numbers and species descriptions by concentrating on interesting anecdotes and "gee whiz" facts about the species under discussion. The authors are African and obviously have had considerable experience with the continent's bird life. On the whole their statements seem accurate, although I was unable to check some of them, but some are incorrect. For example, Great Skua does not breed in the Southern Hemisphere, Kelp