

Book Reviews

Chelonia mydas

The Green Turtle and Man. James J. Parsons. University of Florida Press, Gainesville, 1962. x + 126 pp. Illus. \$8.50.

This attempt to summarize the totality of man's relationship to an important reptilian species shows to advantage the pleasing range over many disciplines that makes good geography such a valuable contribution to modern scientific literature. History blends with anthropology and sociology; ecology, zoogeography, and economics integrate with these and other disciplines to tell a fascinating story which preserves scientific accuracy but escapes the monotony of the separate specialized source works drawn upon.

In the foreword, Archie Carr, the green turtle's keenest student and strongest advocate, nicely sets the scene for Parson's scholarly thesis. The first chapter, a well-rounded essay in itself, deals first with the biology of the species and then moves on to a discussion of human cultural attitudes toward the sea-turtle and a history of its exploitation. There is necessarily some overlap between portions of this first chapter and the second chapter (about half of the book), a historical survey of most of the world's turtling grounds. Following this are short accounts of the use of suckers in turtling and of the exploitation of the South American river turtle, *Podocnemis expansa*, a discussion of the future prospects for *Chelonia mydas*, and an account of present conservation work in the Caribbean area. Although the account of the freshwater turtle *Podocnemis* is well-written, it seems out of place in this book.

Parsons has been very successful in his delicate task of combining knowledge from various specialized fields, and only a few errors and omissions are noteworthy. Modern Thais may say that the eating of turtle is "unthink-

able" (p. 9), but my Thai friends agree that their countrymen fail by the tens of thousands to demonstrate this aversion. *Batagur baska* is not a "land tortoise" (p. 54), but a large river terrapin much like *Podocnemis* in habits. Old Sarawak turtle hands will no doubt be confused by the "Semah" photo on page 10, which presumably was taken on the nearby coast of the main island of Borneo rather than on Palau Talang Talang Besar. It is unfortunate, but perhaps understandable, that the sizeable population of green turtles that nest on the beach at Hamke's Bay, a few miles out of Karachi, West Pakistan, is not recorded on the distribution map (inside the front cover) nor mentioned in the text on pages 53 and 54. When I visited the area with a party of enthusiastic Thais, we found a plentiful number of nesting females, the largest individuals we had seen; neither eggs nor adults are molested by man, so far as we could determine, and this nesting concentration seems to have escaped scientific notice heretofore.

This is a good book, important to the specialist and—surely—of great interest and value to the general reader.

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Primatology

Primatologia. vol. 2, No. 1, pt. 6, *Sehorgan*. J. W. Rohen. Karger, New York, 1962. 210 pp. Illus. SFr. 75.

This is another section of the well-known handbook of primatology, *Primatologia*. The author has made extensive use of the literature to present a comprehensive and useful synopsis of the gross and microscopic anatomy of the eye throughout the order Primates, from Tupaiiformes to Hominoidea. The following list of topics dealt with will serve to give some idea

of the scope of its contents: form and size (both absolute and relative) of the eyeball; position of the eyes, convergence, and visual field; bulbus oculi (retina: including microscopic structure, histochemistry, blood vessels, functional considerations; iris; ciliary body; choroid and ocular blood vessels; cornea and sclera); lens and zona ciliaris; vitreous humor; extraocular muscles; lids and tear-glands.

The list of references comprises 230 items. Unfortunately, even a casual inspection reveals that it contains a number of inaccuracies. Although most of these appear to be of a minor nature, there is at least one glaring error. The cited publications of D. G. Elliot and G. Elliot Smith have been confused. Thus, that of the former (1913) and two of the latter (1924, 1928) have been incorrectly attributed to "Elliot-Smith, D. G."

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Population Ecology

Animal Populations. T. O. Browning. Harper and Row, New York, 1963. 127 pp. Illus. \$2.50.

This small book, which is intended as a nontechnical discussion of population ecology, concisely summarizes a considerable body of information without unduly oversimplifying facts. It is, in a sense, the third generation of a set of ideas and opinions that were first comprehensively enunciated by Andrewartha and Birch (*The Distribution and Abundance of Animals*, University of Chicago Press, 1954); thus it is largely derivative. Populations are regarded as being regulated by weather, resources, other members of their species, other species, and hazards. Mechanisms of regulation and interactions between them are illustrated by a number of examples, drawn largely but not exclusively from the entomological literature. The rationale underlying the discussion is perhaps best exemplified by a quote from Bacon which serves as a frontispiece: ". . . it is plain that the more you recede from your grounds, the weaker do you conclude; and as in nature, the more you remove yourself from particulars, the greater peril of error do you incur. . . ."

At this level it is probably legitimate to approach principles merely by means