

Book Review

MARINE MAMMALS OF AUSTRALASIA—FIELD BIOLOGY AND CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT. Edited by R. L. Augee, Surrey Beatty & Sons, NSW, Australia. Price £9.38.

This small book, bound in stiff card, is a special publication of the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales, and constitutes an issue of *Australia Zoologist* for March 1988. It arose from a 1987 Symposium on Australian marine mammals, and contains various additional papers, the captive management section being contributed entirely by Taronga Park Zoo.

There are three brief background papers by the acknowledged experts in their field, Judith King, Helene Marsh and John Ling, on Australian pinniped, dugong conservation and cetacean research, which give a useful guide to the regional literature. The varied section entitled Field Biology includes two papers on the remarkable management of mass *Pseudorca* strandings, which should be required reading for would be whale conservation organizations. They demonstrate that mass strandings are a problem which can be solved by applying money, organization and, more importantly, huge numbers of volunteers. Other papers in this section cover patterns of cetacean strandings in Tasmania and the recovery of fur seal numbers at Heard Island. A discussion of legal protection for marine mammals in Australian waters demonstrates a remarkable commitment to the protection and recovery of local populations. Gill-net restrictions to prevent cetacean bycatches have been so severe as to drive away the Taiwanese fleet altogether. Happily, effective legislation appears to be backed by careful research.

The final paper in this section, of the status and management of Australian pinnipeds, co-ordinates neatly with the following section on captive management, which is dominated by discussion of the pinniped displays at Taronga Zoo. This zoo took on a programme of planning and construction from 1985 which appears to have resulted in the best, most informative and most conservation-orientated pinniped display in the world. There are real lessons here, covering conservation, education, design, animal management and co-operative wildlife research by zoos.

There is a lot to be gained from this little book, even though the cover almost became detached from my review copy within a very short time. Surrey Beatty are producing an excellent variety of books on Australian wildlife ecology and management, which deserved wider recognition.

Andrew Greenwood,
International Zoo Veterinary Group,
Keighley Business Centre,
South Street,
Keighley,
West Yorkshire BD21 1AG, UK.

Andrew Greenwood asks me to remind readers that the above book, and many more, may be obtained at competitive rates from: Chiron Publications, P.O. Box 25, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD22 9UA, UK.