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sions drawn from the last 30 years of Antarctic marine research.

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ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

TROPICAL ECOSYSTEMS: A SYNTHESIS OF TROPICAL ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION.

Edited by Mundanthra Balakrishnan, Reidar Borgström, and Stein W. Bie. International Science Publisher, Lebanon (New Hampshire). $69.00. x + 441 p.; ill.; author and subject indexes. ISBN: 1-881570-24-X. 1994.

This book's 14 chapters were contributed by 19 authors from six countries. The first four chapters cover ecology, inshore marine systems, freshwater communities, and tropical soils; six of the chapters are case studies or regional overviews from India (three chapters), Sri Lanka, Africa, and the Neotropics; and the four others deal with a systems approach to planning protected areas, international wildlife conventions, remote sensing, and human movement.

In reading this book, I asked myself the question that apparently motivated its sponsorship by Norwegian agencies: If I were teaching nonspecialist students from tropical countries about ecology and development, would this book be useful? The answer, inevitably, is: in part. Would I use the first four chapters as the basic source for ecological principles and general overview? Probably not. The introductory chapter gives broad coverage but attempts, in 16 pages, to blanket the discipline; the result is a choppy compendium of one-sentence pronouncements that read like a sleepy undergraduate's lecture notes. The two chapters on aquatic systems would be useful references because they are packed with potentially useful data on fisheries and techniques, but the long (53-page) chapter on soils is practically a stand-alone introductory course in soil survey; it might be a useful reference, but it is too dry for all but the most highly motivated reader.

What about the regional case studies? Pretty good. For example, Daniel's chapter on wildlife on the Indian subcontinent, one of the best written in the book, includes coverage of mammals, birds, and reptiles, followed by an overview of the conservation status of each. This straightforward approach contrasts with an equally useful chapter by Prakash on Indian deserts, which tackles the subject from a habitat and management perspective, including ample coverage of the role of human activities.

Do the remaining four chapters provide either perspectives or tools to which most students would not have ready access elsewhere? For the most part, yes. More importantly, it is in some of these chapters (e.g., the remote-sensing chapter's dramatic image of an island-like park in a sea of deforestation) that the overwhelming role of human population growth in tropical conservation and development really strike home.

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BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: THE COEXISTENCE OF SPECIES ON CHANGING LANDSCAPES.

By Michael A. Huston. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York. $100.00 (hardcover); $34.95 (paper). xix + 681 p.; ill.; index. ISBN: 0-521-36093-5 (hc); 0-521-36930-4 (pb). 1994.

Yet another book on biodiversity might not seem to be the highest priority for many readers, especially a hefty tome like this one. Huston has provided a thorough explanation of his interesting views on species diversity, views that are not always well represented in other recent volumes on the topic. Much of the volume is dedicated to explaining his "dynamic equilibrium" theory of species diversity and to demonstrating the predictive power of a two-dimensional model in which growth rate ($\approx$ rate of competitive displacement) is plotted against frequency or intensity of disturbance. This model is based on data indicating that diversity is low where either disturbance is rife or productivity is high. This ostensibly simple model is used to interpret and predict species diversity at community and landscape levels, community susceptibility to invasion, life histories of invading species, types of keystone species, plant-life form representation in relation to fire frequency, and species diversity in marine ecosystems. After 570 pages of text replete with evidence of the model's validity, I was convinced of its potential utility.

I admit to not having kept up with the onslaught of new books, journal articles, computer bulletin boards, and even entire journals dedicated to biodiversity issues. It causes me some consternation, therefore, to find that I was familiar with many of the most often cited references in Huston's book, most of which were published in the 1970s and 1980s by North American researchers. As another plant ecologist of the author's vintage, I worry that we might share a similar parochialism. I am not familiar enough with the biodiversity literature to be too critical but, for example, I was surprised that of the 695 citations (98 pages worth!), less