BOOK REVIEWS

The Threatened and Non-Threatened Native Vertebrate Fauna of New South Wales: Status and Ecological Attributes

Environmental and Heritage Monograph Series No. 4

Lunney, D., Curtin, A. L., Ayers, D., Cogger, H. G., Dickman, C. R., Maitz, W., Law, B. and Fisher, D., 2000.
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Hurstville.
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THIS monograph presents the status of all mammal, bird, reptile and frog species in NSW and compares ecological attributes at the familial level. It has been compiled by a diverse array of experts including the authors. The monograph identifies the status of each species and provides their ecological attributes from which patterns of decline (or increase) may be determined. It provides the first official list of vertebrate fauna in NSW and gives scores for each variable affecting species status, which explain the reasons for their inclusion or exclusion in the Threatened Species Conservation Act (1995). The most significant function of the monograph is the establishment of baseline data for future studies. In addition, the report identifies the magnitude of problems faced, provides new material, ideas and direction for conservation programs.

The monograph is aimed at a wide range of specialists users, from those interested in threatened species management to researchers interested in specific species such as the Regent Honeyeater *Xanthomyza phrygia* or a groups of animals, such as owls. For the more general users, the monograph may answer basic questions such as how many of a particular species are still living in NSW. The authors acknowledge that for most users the monograph will be a starting point for further investigation. The monograph uses the geo-political boundaries of NSW, thus a species such as Magpie Goose *Anseranas semipalmata* that is abundant in the Northern Territory is listed as vulnerable in NSW. However, this is not a limitation of the book because there are biological and conservation applications for geo-political boundaries.

The monograph is essentially two chapters with various appendices. Chapter 1, the species' status list with their biological scores and chapter 2, the ecological attributes. Both chapters are set out as Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion. Chapter 2 is dominated by 40 pages of encyclopedic like Results and Discussion, which are concise and easy to read. Table 2 consists of 25 pages, which are well layed out, but too dense for a relaxing read.

The ecological attributes of this study extend the investigation of Lunney *et al.* (1997) in identifying patterns among threatened and non-threatened taxa, including two categories of extinct, nationally and within NSW. The familial analyses examine extinct with extant, region, habitat, weight classes and diet groups. Groups are divided into sub-groups. Thus, the tables and notes are extensive and at times cumbersome. Nevertheless, the data are more descriptive than Lunney *et al.* (1997), and elucidate whether or not patterns at the class level originate from the familial level.

Overall, the monograph presents an immense volume of knowledge that will be useful in writing up or planning any work related to the fauna it covers. It contains valuable and useful knowledge that will have interest to a quite broad audience of professionals and more general readers.

REFERENCES

Lunney, D., Curtin, A., Fisher, D. and Dickman, C. R., 1997. Ecological attributes of threatened fauna of New South Wales. *Pac. Cons. Biol.* **3**: 13–26.

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