

of the interaction of science and the political process through the recent forestry reform in New South Wales. They emphasize that the need for independent (i.e., non government) scientific involvement is crucial to the scientific integrity of conservation outcomes and assessments conducted by Governments via bureaucratic processes. My personal experience is that opposition to the involvement of independent scientific involvement sometimes comes from scientists entrenched within government and/or industry. While their opposition may be partly justified on the grounds that much of the so-called independent comment coming from environmental organizations is biased and/or ill-informed, there is nevertheless room for improvement on both sides. Flint *et al.* (Pp. 222–55) have provided a thoughtful assessment of a complex and politically sensitive process that should be referenced to all senior bureaucrats and scientists. Norman *et al.* (Pp. 208–21) provide an analysis of the South-east Queensland Forests Agreement and Leary and Mamu (Pp. 186–207) outline the conservation status of Papua-New Guinea's forest fauna and the role of community planning.

I was pleased to see included a case study of how regulatory compliance can confound conservation policy leading to less than desirable conservation outcomes (Meek Pp. 256–69). Conservation policy in Australia tends to be dominated by the need to protect climax ecosystems and rarely is the role of disturbance recognized as necessary for maintenance of seral species. This should not be a novel revelation as deliberate disturbance of wetlands by grazing has been a common management practice in the maintenance of United States waterfowl populations for decades. More recent work in northern Australia is indicating that the healthiest populations of certain macropods seem to occur in eucalypt woodlands heavily grazed by cattle.

It is good to note the inclusion of many papers on non-totemic species (i.e., forest trees, birds and mammals). *Forest Fauna* contains a range of papers on invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles, which go some way to filling out the faunal spectrum. Stanisic and Ponder (Pp. 127–49) note in their paper on forest snails that 99% of forest fauna not only lacks a backbone but collectively plays a far more important role in the functioning and health of ecosystems than vertebrates.

With respect to this book, the pertinent question is will the assembled information be used to the greatest effect? That is a greater challenge than collating and editing. Dan Lunney has done a mighty job in pulling this information together into a useful and relevant resource volume. It is now up to our professional groups, those of us in positions of influence, indeed all of us, to use this book to provide authoritative advice to wherever it can be of value. The question then becomes one of where. For instance will the Prime Minister, his Cabinet Ministers or their senior advisors read this book? Highly unlikely. Will the CEOs of government and industry read this book? Again highly unlikely. This is the nub of the problem. Flint *et al.* (Pp. 222–55) cited the inability of scientists to directly influence political process in any real way as being a reason for the New South Wales forestry reform not achieving certain conservation outcomes. Perhaps a little lateral thinking might assist.

We all are familiar with the situation where organizations tend to overlook their in-house experts but listen to outside consultants. Daniel Lunney has provided us with the ultimate consultant — unquestionably authoritative, well documented and at remarkably little cost! In that sense I thoroughly recommend *Conservation of Australia's Forest Fauna* (second edition) not only to research workers but also to all stakeholders in forest fauna conservation.

One with Nineveh: Politics, Consumption and the Human Future

Paul and Anne Ehrlich, 2004.
Island Press/Shearwater Books, Washington, DC.
376 pp. ISBN 1 55963 879 6
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*"Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!"*

(Rudyard Kipling's 'Recessional', 1897)

THE Ehrlichs' title refers to Nineveh, once a rich and glorious city on the Tigris River, but now a group of dirt mounds in the desert . . . will we learn the environmental lesson, or repeat the history? This scholarly new book demonstrates again the ability of Paul and Anne Ehrlich to dig wide and deep into the literature of our social and environmental problems, to sift for the facts of change, and to piece

a resulting mosaic together. On the resource side, the picture they create speaks in up-to-date detail of nearly universal environmental deterioration; of water, soil, biodiversity and atmosphere. Our resource use is out of step with our environment's capability, and we are steadily damaging it. On the social side the picture points to the mismatch between the dominant culture's view of the world and the world revealed by scientific analysis. The careful picture the Ehrlichs build speaks to all of us, on every continent, and warns us that our cultures cannot continue like this. While the story is harsh, they also study solutions, physical and social, and these are as much at the heart of this book as their statements on looming problems.

They give us a state of the art look at those great drivers of environmental difficulties . . . increasing population and increasing consumption

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(or over-consumption in the case of the industrial nations) and their effects. But much of the emphasis is on the social issues of inequity, globalization and trade, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the increasing power of corporate giants, ethics, governance and the right to honest information. They provide critical analyses of many problems and explore possible solutions. Will we follow the Nineveh path and run our environment down to our own detriment? The Ehrlichs point to a fundamental difference between that time and now. Six hundred years before the birth of Christ that rich Mesopotamian society was unable to see the dead end they were inexorably moving towards. But we can. Our scientific understanding, though imperfect, is sharp enough to tell us of the changes that are occurring, their causes and their rates, and what we must do about them. The

question is whether we will find the will and the leadership to make the changes to our concepts and our societal fabric that are necessary. The Ehrlichs, after being depressed at the end of the work, listened to a recording of a speech that changed the world; Martin Luther King's "I have a dream." It made them rethink, and they end: "In the face of pervasive injustice, and massive environmental need, idealism can be realism." One can only thank them for their tremendous hard work . . . and finally also for their optimism.

I find this a must-read and must-keep book, and will often refer to it. It is impeccably resourced, referenced, annotated and indexed (supporting information and references form a quarter of the book) and allows an easy entry to delving further into the literature.