

activist around Australia in the 1980s and 1990s, and in doing so offers an insight into the rise of radical environmentalism. Cohen's memoirs of 16 years of environmental action cover a wide range of actions, from sand mining at Middle Head Beach, to uranium mining at Roxby Downs in South Australia, and political campaigning for the Greens. They provide an insight into the controversial techniques employed by Cohen and associates.

The book consists of 17 chapters and two appendices. The chapters are in chronological order and each tells of a separate event. The chapters portray the maturation of the activists who attended these sequential events, developed strategy, facilitated action and passed on information. Appendix I, co-written by Felicity Ruby, is a discussion of the different philosophical positions held, regarding the generally accepted method of nonviolent political action, within the environmental movement. Appendix II consists of "Ground Rules for Green Radicals" and explains how to organize for change. It highlights some of the activities that can be undertaken for the local and global environment.

Cohen's aims in writing this book are not as immediately obvious as were Brown and Singer's in "The Greens". It appears that Cohen intended on painting a different and indeed more accurate picture of environmental protests, to that which has been flashed across media channels for over a decade. The text views the phenomena of action in defence of an ideal from the "front line", not from a far removed viewpoint as usually presented by the media. It portrays an understanding for the passionate struggle, sometimes almost out-of-control, and at times deemed

unacceptable by mainstream society and more conservative conservation organizations such as the Wilderness Society. Anecdotal sections appear to be aimed at allowing a deeper understanding of these types of events in the Australian context. Cohen creates an awareness of the importance of the activists' struggles, and the victories which saved high conservation value areas and set important precedents for future events. The debate over methods used by front line environmental activists is ongoing, and those involved may find "Green Fire" a pertinent source of information.

I felt that Cohen successfully conveyed the meaning behind this series of entertaining yet heartfelt stories. It is a highly readable and enjoyable novel, and I would recommend it to anyone interested in the environmental movement or people seeking to instigate or facilitate environmental or social change. Cohen's hope is that "the information provided here will encourage people to embark on their own projects, to save the world through liberation from powerlessness" (p. 250).

"The Greens" and "Green Fire" are both a means of increasing awareness within our society of the need for environmental protection. Singer and Brown hope to achieve this by informing the reader of the benefits of voting Green. The more people understand what Green politics is about, the better they will be able to make an informed decision regarding who should hold political power. "Greenfire", uses the memoirs of a prominent environmental activist and Green politician, to improve the image of environmental activism. This in turn could improve the image of Green politics, which has been and is influenced by the involvement of environmental activists.

## Rare or Threatened Australian Plants: 1995 Revised Edition

J. D. Briggs and J. H. Leigh, 1996  
CSIRO Australia, Collingwood  
x + 466 pp. ISBN 0 643 05798 6  
RRP AUD\$44.95

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THE future of Australia's flora is dependent upon developing an understanding within the community and management of the need for conservation. A vital ingredient in achieving this understanding is the provision of accurate information on how many species are threatened or have already become extinct. *Rare or Threatened Australian Plants (ROTAP): 1995 Revised Edition* fulfils such a need and represents an up to date list of taxa that are presumed extinct, endangered, vulnerable, rare or poorly known at the national level.

The book is intended as a comprehensive reference work for taxonomists and managers of biodiversity, and is structured accordingly. The majority of its 466 pages are devoted to lists of rare and threatened species that incorporate a coding system for threat categories that is now widely understood and employed in Australia. The system is based on the IUCN threat category

definitions and summarizes information on distribution, conservation status and size of reserved populations. Detailed notes are provided on coding system category definitions, changes to the coding system and correct application. A part of the book I considered particularly helpful were the examples of taxa in each conservation category. This assists the reader unfamiliar with previous editions of ROTAP to understand how the categories are applied. It should be noted that the IUCN categories have been reviewed over recent years, and the authors acknowledge that these changes will be considered for future editions of the ROTAP list.

In this new edition, there is both an Australian list of all taxa by family as well as separate State and Territory lists (including Christmas Island, Norfolk Island and Cocos Island). Information on each taxa in the lists includes genus, species (or infra-specific type/name), authority or descriptor phrase, conservation code, CALM code (priority flora code for taxa occurring in Western Australia), states in which the taxa occurs, region and extent of reservation, and reserve name and type. Maps are included of the regions used in recording distribution of taxa in each state. Changes to the content and format of the lists are described in detail and this is particularly useful to those familiar with previous editions.

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In their introduction to the fourth edition, the authors comment on the dynamic nature of the task of assessing the conservation status of Australia's flora. This is evident by the ROTAP publication history and the considerable additions to the list over the last 17 years. The ROTAP series arose from lists of rare and endangered species for each State and Territory compiled by Specht, Roe and Boughton and published as a supplement to the *Australian Journal of Botany* in 1974. With the intent of assessing the conservation status of Australia's flora from a national perspective, the lists were further developed by CSIRO in 1979 and published as *Plants at Risk in Australia* (by Hartley and Leigh). Subsequent versions were published in 1981 (ROTAP by Leigh, Briggs and Hartley) and 1988 (ROTAP: 1988 Revised Edition by Briggs and Leigh). Since Hartley and Leigh (1979), the ROTAP list has expanded from 2 053 to 5 031 taxa. The authors consider changes to the list over time to be a result of new information from surveys and research, reductions in the level of threat through the declaration of new reserves and agreements, continued decline of many species despite improved knowledge and management techniques, and the inclusion of subspecies and varieties (not included in editions prior to 1995). In addition to these changes in the number of taxa listed, there has been 3 270 amendments to data for listed taxa, and 2 012 additional records of regional data for taxa already listed. Rare or threatened flora lists published independently by State and Territory agencies since the last ROTAP edition, have been used to update the ROTAP list. The list represents a significant level of collaboration and contribution from Australian National, State and Territory taxonomists, ecologists, botanical consultants and amateur botanists.

No list of biological information is complete without summary statistics and ROTAP delivers the goods. Statistics on numbers of taxa, distribution across conservation categories, state and regional distribution of rare and endangered taxa, and extent of reservation within states and territories. For those of us who feel more relieved knowing that populations of endangered/rare taxa are within national parks or reserves, ROTAP tells us that 54.4% of the total taxa are at a lower level of risk than the remainder. A sobering statistic, however, is that for 74% of these "safer" taxa we do not know the size of the reserved population/s.

Geographic comparisons identify Western Australia, and particularly the floristically diverse south-west, as

having the greatest proportion (46%) of Australia's endangered/rare taxa. Despite this, Western Australia has the lowest proportion (45.6%) of reserved endangered/rare taxa with only a 1.1% increase in this statistic over the seven years prior to publication of this new edition of ROTAP. It should also be stated that due to the significant lack of accurate size data for reserved populations, it will be some considerable time before the level of such information will be improved.

Given the dynamic nature of the pressures placed on taxa, deliberations over the conservation status of Australian flora and the extent of poorly known species, it is not surprising that continuous updating of the ROTAP list is required to provide accurate and up to date information. But how relevant is the ROTAP list? In Australia there are three national lists of threatened/rare flora, ROTAP, the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC) Threatened Australian Flora List, and the Endangered Species Protection Act Schedule 1 (ESP Act). ANZECC is the Federal, Territory and State Governments' recognized working list of the status of nationally threatened plant species but, like the ROTAP list, has no legal status. The list included in the ESP Act however has legal status and is based on the agreed ANZECC list at the time the Act was proclaimed. It can be argued that despite the ROTAP not having a formal status, it is an important reference work that is more up to date than the ANZECC and ESP Act lists due to the delays usually associated with government consideration and approval processes. What the ROTAP list has that the others do not are rare and poorly known taxa and many endangered and vulnerable taxa that have not yet made it to the ANZECC and ESP Act lists. The ROTAP list therefore gives a much more complete picture of the Australian threatened/rare flora and its value is as an academic reference work and not as a legislative tool.

One should not expect any substantial information in ROTAP on how to best manage endangered/rare taxa. The book is intended to be a significant reference on this topic and I believe it fulfils that objective completely. If you work or have an interest in this field it is likely that you are already familiar with previous editions of this work. This fourth edition includes substantial additions and is well worth the modest investment.

## The exploitation of mammal populations

Edited by Victoria J. Taylor and Nigel Dunstone, 1996  
Chapman and Hall, London  
415 pp. ISBN 0 412 644207  
RRP Aud\$85.00

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*THE exploitation of mammal populations* forms in part, the proceedings of a symposium held in London in November, 1994 by two "scientific animal charities", the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) and the Mammal Society. It contains 22

chapters arranged in five sections: Exploitation of mammal populations past, present and future; Harvesting wild mammal populations; Hunting and its impact on wildlife; Wildlife trade and conservation; and Ecotourism-making mammal populations pay.

A wide range of topics are covered, with the central theme being the utilization of mammals. Chapters include Saiga antelope in Kalmykia (near the Caspian Sea), Capybaras in South America, meat hunting in the Serengeti, hunting and the deployment of hounds in the United Kingdom and other forms of sport hunting

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