# BOOK REVIEWS

## Veterinary Conservation Biology: Wildlife Health and Management in Australasia

### Proceedings of International Joint Conference, 1–6 July 2001, Taronga Zoo, Sydney, Australia

**Anne Martin and Larry Vogelnest, 2001.**
**Australian Veterinary Association Conference Organizing Committee,**
**Kingston, Australian Capital Territory, Australia.**
**292 pp., Paperback.**
**RRP: AUD$50.**

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WILDLIFE conservation in Australasia continues to be a challenging yet exciting field of study. However, it has focused chiefly on the management of exotic pests and the conservation of dwindling populations of threatened species by wildlife biologists. The significance of disease has rarely been monitored and has largely been overlooked as a possible catalyst towards the past, and indeed current, flux in populations of species. Recent wildlife health issues highlight the paucity of baseline information on wildlife disease. The involvement of veterinarians in these conservation projects has largely been minimal. The title of the proceedings, *Veterinary Conservation Biology*, offers insight into a unique co-operation between biologists and veterinarians. These proceedings present a vast spectrum of studies that aim to highlight the contributing role that veterinarians can play in the conservation of native wildlife.

The major concept of these proceedings is the realization that veterinary scientists and conservation biologists can collaborate. The proceedings comprise 58 papers and 11 poster abstracts mainly from studies across Australia and New Zealand, including some international projects from the UK, USA, south-east Asia, and the subantarctic islands. Together, these studies focus chiefly on the discipline of wildlife conservation and management. Papers range from abstracts alone, to detailed descriptions with analysed results and discussion, and with additional references.

The proceedings are divided into five sections: Conservation biology and management; Sustainable utilization of wildlife; Marine wildlife and birds; Wildlife translocation, reintroduction, recovery and captive breeding programmes; and Wildlife health in Australia. These disciplines are diverse but are central to conservation biology, and each study identifies unique skills that are relevant to wildlife conservation and management. There are obvious direct benefits to wildlife conservation if veterinarians are involved in the project at the outset.

As a conservation biologist, what I gained most from reading these proceedings is the valuable contribution that veterinary scientists can make towards the more specialized discipline of health and disease in a diverse array of wildlife species. Wildlife health and disease has been surveyed and compared among a variety of vertebrate species, including fish, marine and terrestrial birds, marine and terrestrial mammals, amphibians, and monotremes.

These proceedings offer an important reference material, and reinforces an alliance between veterinary scientists and conservation biologists that should continue.

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## After the Ark? Environmental Policy Making and the Zoo

**Author: Nicole A. Mazur.**
**Melbourne University Press, PO Box 278, Carlton South, Victoria 3053, Australia**
**First published 2001, xiii, 262 pp. ISBN 0 522 84947 4.**

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"AFTER the Ark? Environmental Policy Making and the Zoo" is the outcome of the research on zoos Mazur conducted between 1993 and 1999. The author metaphorically relates zoos to the story of Noah's Ark that saved all species during the great flood. Unlike Noah who had enough space, she underlines that today modern zoos face more restrictions in space and management policies. The author gives a clear picture of how zoos evolved from menageries to zoos today. She discusses the influence of the modern day environmental policies on how zoos are managed and its sustainability.

#### Organization

"After the Ark?" is organized in seven chapters with informative appendices. Chapter 1 describes the evolution of primitive zoos and the related organizations around the world responsible for the conservation of zoos. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 explains the need of research for conservation of zoo animals, prioritizing list of animals to be included in the ark, and managing the ark with limited resources and space. Chapter 4 presents ideas on how zoos should be used not only for recreation but more for education purposes, for example, to carry out researches on zoo animals for their sustainability. Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 deal with the management and hierarchical arrangement between and within zoos or conservation bodies, on national and international scale. Chapter 6 provides arguments for imposing economic value to animals and their conservation. The final chapter, Sailing into Unknown Waters, provides vision for the future ark and questions the relevance of "the Ark" metaphor as she opines that this term has outlived its meaning in present day world.

#### Content and scope

The book is based on the author's field surveys and existing literature on the subject. She uses secondary data to justify her interpretation. Her presentation and illustration with case studies gives an understanding of how changes in policies, economical and ecological, bring about substantial change in conservation of zoo animals. Mazur efficiently gets the message across to the reader in the form

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