we destroy ourselves — readers must be cautioned. Diamond's model of environmental contempt cannot explain the demise of every society. For example, the collapse of the Roman, Ottoman and Egyptian Empires was primed through a combination of political turmoil, civil unrest, increasing taxation, foreign incursion, economic depression and ascendancy of religious cults; loosely coupled with environmental misfortune.

Those salivating at the well-publicized Australian chapter will be disillusioned. Although comprehensive, the chapter lacks profundity, containing little more substance than can be gleaned from a high school geography text. Accordingly, experts will find the chapter more akin to a literature review than epic new text; merely reiterating the imprudence espoused by homegrown ecologists, such as Mercer, Recher and Flannery (from whom much of Diamond's insight is derived). Amateur readers will find *Collapse* illuminative and a valuable preamble to Australia's environmental problems (although further inclusion of photographs would assist this). However, recent Commonwealth State of Environment Reports or Natural Resource Audits offer readers an equally holistic impression.

Mindful of *Collapse's* international distribution and multi-disciplinary appeal, perhaps the text's most important audience is those who govern the fate of civilizations; the political decision-makers who seemingly relinquish all ecological-sensibility upon assuming office. By appealing to economic rationalism, Diamond conveys a more plausible and pervasive argument than the most vociferous environmentalist. But then again, what does it matter — it is only society at stake! Let us just hope that as Diamond insinuates, humanity can indeed reorientate their practises and salvage civilizations morally-assembled on exploiting the environment. Judging by Diamond's thesis, nature seems less forgiving.

Conserving Marine Environments: Out of Sight Out of Mind

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THIS publication comprises proceedings of a marine conservation forum. Why are marine environments "out of sight out of mind"? Good question, however, I was a little disappointed to find that generally it was not addressed and consequently, I do not believe that this forum has done much to progress marine conservation. For the most part it was only Harry Recher's Forward and the Summary paper by Pat Hutchings and Dan Lunney, which made an attempt to answer this question; they argued for, at least to some extent, the human aspect of marine conservation. That might be a little unfair on Sarah Fairfull and Robert Williams, who in presenting the new age of regional delivery of natural resource management through acknowledged peak regional groups, also acknowledge the role that communities can now serve in setting conservation priorities.

It is from the perspective of a Senior Officer responsible for the development and delivery of the Regional Natural Resource Management strategy for Western Australia's northern agricultural region, a peak regional natural resource management group in this State, that I have undertaken this review. I am responsible for the development of regional terrestrial and marine resource management strategies and it is from this position that my comments are as much about what I would like to see happening in marine conservation, and particularly in breaking down some of the old barriers like "out of sight out of mind". The currently all-too-common "out of sight out of mind" perspective on marine environments has been a particularly difficult barrier to overcome in developing community aspirations with regard to marine conservation issues.

It seems to me that community attitudes to the marine environment have advanced little over the past decade. Why? It appears that an inherent difficulty remains for both the scientific community and the established bureaucracies to acknowledge and involve the broader community in both scientific discovery and policy development. In particular, Harry Recher argues there is ". . . too much emphasis on protected areas" and ". . . not enough attention on off-reserve management . . ." and considering that there is essentially ". . . no fundamental difference between terrestrial and aquatic functions of ecosystems to my mind

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underlines the importance of involving people in the process" of management. Until we can involve everyday people with a belief that they are both part of the problem and the solution, then we will struggle to advance this debate.

I found leading the proceedings with the issue of compliance and international treaty an effective way of losing all but the most dedicated of readers. Sadly, law enforcement and compliance is a necessary conservation and management issue, but I do not think Martin Tsamenyi, Greg Rose and Alison Castle really addressed the challenge of how compliance could be presented as a need and not just a "big stick" approach. Compliance is a viable management option and a necessary one, but not a solution in itself. In a world of litigation we have unfortunately sponsored a profession dedicated to finding loop-holes and escape clauses, and I for one would have expected to see data on the difference(s) that international treaties have made to the conservation of a variety of species and their associated habitats.

Richard Kenchington and then Paul Adam discuss issues of property rights and the problem of the commons. This is a critical area and one that could have done more for addressing the issue of being "out of sight out of mind". However, this was not the case in these proceedings. I believe that there is a need too for the scientific community to involve themselves in the perilous world of ethics discussion, but all too often this has been embedded in the world of philosophical deliberation; I say drop the academic terminology and involve people in a debate that transcends current religious belief systems where natural environments are presented as fair game.

On a more positive note, Kelly Waples presents whale watching as an activity that involves the "common man" and which can contribute to scientific endeavour. This paper goes a good way to answering my earlier criticisms of science's inability to recognize the value and critical contribution of observation by interested non-scientists, and presents a way forward for science to at least have the perception of relevance to the broader community. The paper by David Priddel on seabird mortality, however, was disappointing. In contrast to Waple's paper, Priddel appears to ignore the potential value that industry can provide to scientific endeavour albeit by non-scientists. This criticism is not based on the scientific merit of the study but its failure to present seabird observations as a vehicle similar to that of Waples. That is, as a means to involve community, including various maritime professions in scientific endeavour, that we the community can identify with. More and more I find the need for acceptance of this type of observational record as a legitimate means of integrating science, policy and community.

I must sympathize with and apologize to Pat Hutchings and Tony Underwood and M. Chapman; as a manager, how do we sell the critical role in ecosystem function of "those little creepy crawlies"? These animals really are "out of sight out of mind". Acknowledgement in the popular press of the contribution that invertebrates serve is a major challenge for both our environmental educators and our journalists, and also for our scientists! Scientists need to look for ways and means of "popularizing" invertebrates; the "too hard option" is no longer one and we need to find ways to make these seemingly less appealing species more so. In contrast is W. Ponder's case for the importance of marine endemism, but in many ways this argument fails to acknowledge the relevance or community value of unique species. Referring back to the comments of Recher, on a broad scale this contention is no different to terrestrial endemism, but to a greater extent the argument tends to foster a general perception that the only marine ecosystem worth conserving is a coral reef (read rainforest) and sells the marine world very short. We need to know what our marine world offers and what are its many (intrinsic and extrinsic) values; what the sea grass meadow means to its local area other than that smelly mass of seaweed on the beach.

I found Russ Babcock's discussion of the outcomes of establishing marine conservation areas of particular relevance and one of the few papers that reported any recordable differences due to their establishment. Again, there is a contrasting paper on similar subjects; R. Creese and D. Breen acknowledge the need for similar analyses, but even following a significant time since the formation of Marine Park Authorities in New South Wales there is no substantive data to support formal conservation areas.

In summary, I found that the papers most relevant to me as a manager were not part of the actual proceedings. In the past I have found that researchers seldom address the topic of the forum they are invited to deal with and I found this true of these proceedings. Until we integrate applied research with management activity and incorporate the aspirations of the broader community, I cannot help but feel that the marine world will remain "out of sight out of mind".