

In contrast to the above 'sins of omission', 'The Recreation Boom' is well-researched. Many travellers have not, of course, felt the need to publish their accounts, but of those who have a very good selection has been considered. Furthermore, the ill-prepared and foolhardy have also been mentioned, and their deaths provide a timely warning that the Simpson is truly an Australian Desert.

'Conservation and a Look to the Future' is the fifth and final chapter. The inertia of the Northern Territory Government is contrasted with the endeavours of South Australia and Queensland in creation of a National Park. However, the total review is positive and well argued and, as with all chapters, excellent illustrations are used throughout.

Finally, although the appendices are very useful, the Bibliography is limited, and a search through the 'References' is required to locate all sources.

In summary, Mark Shephard's 'The Simpson Desert' despite some limitations, is undoubtedly well-conceived, well-researched, competently written, excellently illustrated, and well-produced. It is excellent value and an essential purchase for people with any interest at all in the 'Natural History and Human Endeavour' of the Simpson or, indeed, more generally of inland Australia.

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Pest animals in Australia

By George Wilson, Nick Dexter, Peter O'Brien and Mary Bomford

Publisher: Bureau of Rural Resources and Kangaroo Press

Price: \$16.95

This glossy 64 page book is sub-titled 'A Survey of Introduced Wild Mammals' and that is basically what it is. It provides a medium for a series of distribution maps of pest animals across Australia. The species covered range from major pests where control activities are warranted such as pigs, donkeys, horses, rabbits and goats to minor or widespread species (camels, deer, rats, mice) where control is not an important issue.

Both the forward and the text acknowledge the 'limitations in accuracy, precision and currency' and this is undoubtedly the major weakness of the book. Given this, it must be questioned why the data has been presented in a relatively expensive coffee-table format as it is unlikely to have general community appeal.

Each of the 20 species is described under headings of history, distribution, diet, behaviour, breeding, impact, control and value as a resource. The description is necessarily brief but is sufficiently well referenced for interested readers to obtain more detail.

The exception is the distribution and habitat which is based on information provided by the various State and Territory agencies responsible for pest animal management. Their different approaches to management and the subjective differences in assessment of densities result in some cross-border anomalies in the maps.

Since responsibility for policy and control will remain with individual States/Territories the differences in assessment and the publication of these maps will not have any effect on actual control. Nevertheless, the presentation of an Australia wide picture of these various pest animals seems, somehow, to be a necessary and worthwhile contribution.

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