BOOK REVIEW

Practical Conservation Biology

D. Lindenmayer and M. Burgman, 2005.
CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Victoria.
609 pp. ISBN 0-643-09089-4.
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In recent years there has been a marked increase in the number of Australian universities offering courses or units in conservation biology. Consequently, there has been an increased demand for a student text which relates the intricacies of the discipline to the unique circumstances associated with the Australian continent. In response, Lindenmayer and Burgman deliver *Practical Conservation Biology*, a successor to their earlier text *Conservation Biology for the Australian Environment*.

Like its predecessor, the book is divided into four broad sections. It opens with "principles for conservation", which introduces the reader to the concepts and paradigms associated with conservation by addressing fundamental questions such as why conserve? and what should be conserved? This is followed by a section which examines the negative impacts that humans have had on the natural world; a particular emphasis is placed on the biological consequences of habitat fragmentation and the relationship between fire and biota. The authors then move on to discuss some "methods of analysis" which are available to conservation biologists. These include field and laboratory procedures for data collection and analysis. The final section, "management principles for conservation", discusses the fragile relationship between conservation and exploitation and emphasizes the need for adaptive management strategies which will facilitate conservation at all biological scales.

Much of the text has been extracted directly from *Conservation Biology for the Australian Environment*. However, as an honours student who has read extensively from both versions, I feel that the additions, alterations and cosmetic overhaul have vastly improved its readability, and thus justify the new title. The transition between chapters and sections is more logical, and the book's conceptual framework is outlined in a new general introduction.

In addition to emphasis on the Australian environment, the book exhibits a number of characteristics which distinguish it from other conservation biology texts. It is written from a practical perspective, drawing heavily from recent case studies (most of which are Australian) to help the reader bridge the gap between theory and practice. Emphasis is also placed on the multidisciplinary nature of conservation biology, including the need for co-operation between industry, government and the community when generating effective conservation outcomes. The book also boasts extensive in text referencing and a 100 plus page bibliography.

Presentation is of an exceptional standard from cover to cover. Supplementary materials (including black and white figures, tables and photographs) are highly relevant and numerous throughout. Sections and chapters are well organized, and headings and subheadings are used effectively. The writing style should challenge the undergraduate reader, yet concepts are clearly explained and scientific jargon is defined in an extensive glossary.

Although *Practical Conservation Biology* is written with the advanced undergraduate reader in mind, it would also prove a valuable reference for the postgraduate student or researcher setting foot on unfamiliar soil. One would certainly expect to see it on university booklists Australia wide, and remain so for many years to come.

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