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Book Reviews

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The Antarctic dive guide

Lisa Eareckson Kelley
3rd edition, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2015.
ISBN-13: 978-0-691-163444 (paperback). 144 pp. £19.95.
ISBN: 978-1-400-865994 (e-book).

Few divers are fortunate enough to venture below the waves around Antarctica, this book is a must for those that do or hope to. Lisa Eareckson Kelley is one of the continent's most experienced SCUBA users and has personally explored the sites she describes (and it shows in the detail). Lisa produced the first dive guide to the coldest and least explored waters on Earth and this third edition is the latest update of that book (published by WILDGuides). Though only small, tablet-sized, it is impressively comprehensive and really well-structured, so much so that I could not think of a single way to improve the lay out.

When you open this guide, it is clearly a book of two halves. The first half is a background of the history, the place, key features, photography and underwater marine life. Each section leads nicely into the next taking you on a journey from 1902 (the first Antarctic dive) through to planning your own dives in the future. The section on leopard seals demystifies one of the region's largest marine predators and is a fitting tribute to Kirsty Brown, who was tragically killed by one whilst snorkelling in 2003. There are helpful tips on underwater photography and video, and there is even a subsection on running a remotely operated vehicle (mini robot submarine). All this is punctuated throughout by clear and striking photos; there is a superb image of a leopard seal with its mouth open around the fin of a swimming gentoo penguin (p. 41). Many of the diverse array of marine creatures a diver might encounter in the shallows are shown and named in full colour photos. Some animals are shown and merely identified as e.g. sponges, which is entirely sensible, since a proper identification of these (even by an expert) requires microscopy of skeletal material (spicules in the case of sponges).

The second half of the book is dedicated to the dive sites, 31 of them. I particularly like the fact that this starts with an overview map showing the site locations. I looked through these and despite working as a scientific diver since 1990 and having undertaken more than a thousand dives in Antarctica, I have only managed a mere four of those sites! I would like to say that as scientific divers we instead get very familiar with a few specific locations, but then an iceberg gets blown across your bay and completely rearranges the seabed. I guess we get to see lots of different scapes at the same geographical spots! For those readers planning to join an expedition ship and to visit some of the sites described in the guide, the book is a bible. Each dive site is given two pages which include a description, a map and GPS position, several photographs of things you might see and some quick-view icons summarizing the key features of the dive. The last seven sites span the longitudinal range of the north shore of South Georgia, one of the most biologically spectacular and frequently visited regions around Antarctica.

The guide is completed by some helpful guidelines on watching marine wildlife, a glossary of terms and some related reading suggestions. In summary, this book is small enough to carry about, big enough to contain the detail without the guff and well written enough to engage your interest in each dive. Well done to the author and other contributors!

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Penguins: natural history and conservation

Edited by Pablo Garcia Borboroglu & P. Dee Boersma University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA, 2013.
ISBN: 978-0-295-99284-6 (paperback). 328 pp. £19.75.

I started my marine ornithological career with penguins, specifically the African (then jackass) penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*) nearly five decades ago. I have worked with five species of Southern Ocean penguins, and I have been lucky to have visited the breeding sites of most other species over the years. However, more recently I have been concentrating on albatrosses and petrels. So, how well does this new book serve to bring me up to date?

The book consists of 17 individually authored chapters, each covering a species; however, the royal (*Eudyptes schlegeli*) and macaroni (*E. chrysolophus*) penguins (treated as separate species) are somewhat surprisingly combined into a single chapter, which may be explained by the lack of an Australian co-author who has studied royals on Macquarie Island. Not surprisingly the species' accounts vary in length, reflecting the amount of available research. The very well-studied African penguin (although