

**Parks in Peril: People, Politics and Protected Areas** by Brandon, K., Redford, K.H. & Sanderson, S.E. (eds) (1998) *The Nature Conservancy*. Island Press, Washington, DC & Covelo, CA. 519 pp. SB. \$US30.00. ISBN 1-55963-608-4

During the last two decades conservation concepts have shifted to a sustainable-use approach, which works through people's wise use of resources. This book challenges the sustainable-use approach, arguing that there has not been enough ecological analysis of how this use affects biodiversity. It presents an analysis of current trends in park management and its implications for biodiversity conservation. Examining parks from social, political and ecological perspectives, the book identifies the inherent conflicts in translating the idea of sustainable use into action, and the impacts of those actions on biodiversity. Nine case studies highlight the interaction of ecosystems, local peoples and policy in park management, and describe the context of field-based conservation from the perspective of those implementing the programmes. The book argues four main points: the challenge in protecting biodiversity is inherently political; sustainable use has limitations as a primary tool for biodiversity conservation; effective park management requires the understanding of historical forces and social factors that shape the local context at each site; actions to protect parks need a level of conceptual clarity and action that move beyond the recent programme slogans and stereotypes for conservation. Throughout, the contributors argue that protected areas are extremely important for the protection of biodiversity, yet cannot be expected to serve as the sole means of biodiversity conservation. Requiring them to carry the entire burden of conservation is a recipe for ecological and social disaster.

**Wild Species as Commodities: Managing Markets and Ecosystems for Sustainability** by Freese, C.H. (1998) *World Wildlife Fund*. Island Press, Washington, DC & Covelo, CA. 319 pp. ISBN 1-55963-572-X SB

Some policy makers and conservationists believe that natural resources will be protected only if economic benefits accrue to those who are responsible for caring for the resources and that commercial consumptive use of wild species provides an economically viable alternative to more ecologically destructive land uses. Yet many questions remain. Will the harvest of wild species be sustainable? Will habitats be protected? What trade-offs are implied for the populations and ecosystems under management? While this debate goes on, researchers and managers are confronting an array of

problems in managing harvested populations of wild species. This book presents a balanced scientifically rigorous consideration of the link between commercial consumptive use of wild species and biodiversity conservation.

**Biodiversity Conservation in Central Asia: An Analysis of Biodiversity and Current Threats and Initial Investment Portfolio** by Krever, V., Pereladova, O., Williams, M. & Jungius, H. (eds) (1998) *World Wildlife Fund for Nature*, 1998. 111 pp. ISBN 5-7516-0137-8. Availability: c/o WWF 232, PO Box 289, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 8WJ, UK. Tel: +7 095 268 1537; Fax: +7 095 190 4655; E-mail: olga@perelad.msk.ru

This report reviews the current status of biodiversity conservation in the five republics of Central Asia that were formerly part of the Soviet Union—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The region contains diverse ecosystems—mountains, deserts, steppes, wetlands and forests—and has a combined angiosperm flora of 7000 species and 90 vertebrate species. In some areas 18–20 per cent of the flora is represented by species with narrow ranges. The future of some animal species, such as the saiga antelope and the kulan, depend on preserving the remaining steppe in its entirety through region-wide programmes. Compiled with the participation of more than 300 experts, and aimed at donors and conservation organizations with interests in the region, the report includes an investment portfolio of 93 projects aimed at resolving the most urgent problems for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

**Europe's Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Their Use and Conservation** by Lange, D. (1998) *A TRAFFIC Network Report*. TRAFFIC International, Cambridge, UK. 77 pp. plus annexes. ISBN 1-85850-144X. TRAFFIC International, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL, UK.

This report identifies 150 species of Europe's medicinal and aromatic plants that could be at risk in one or several countries from over-collection in the wild—a number likely to climb with further research. At least 1200–1300 of these plants are used on a commercial basis every year, with the majority being taken directly from the wild. The report reviews European trade and documents the results of in-depth studies in: Albania, Bulgaria, France, Germany,

Hungary, Spain, Turkey and the UK. The use of herbal medicine has recently attained a heightened profile and status in Europe, with more people turning to 'natural' remedies. In western Europe alone, medicinal plant consumption is estimated to have doubled in the past decade. The report includes a number of recommendations for the conservation of Europe's medicinal and aromatic plants, including enhanced trade monitoring, consideration of international trade controls for particular species, and improved legislation and law enforcement.

**Gone Astray: The Care and Management of the Asian Elephant in Domesticity** by Lair, R.C. (1998) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Forestry Department, Rome, Italy, and Forestry Department Group, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. 300 pp. ISBN 974-89472-3-8

This book deals with a wide range of questions concerning the 16,000 domesticated elephants in 11 of the 13 countries in the Asian elephant's range. Domesticated elephants are largely ignored by conservationists, yet the author argues that well-managed domesticated elephants offer many potential benefits to wild elephants. Changing economies and eroding cultural traditions mean that, like the wild populations, their numbers are falling, and their declining value means that many are in need of help. An introduction examines the many facets of elephant keeping, separate chapters deal with the particular situation in each country, and a concluding chapter summarizes the problems and suggests courses of action. There is an extensive bibliography. For anyone with a romantic view of elephant keeping and the mahout–elephant relationship the book will be a revelation. For copies write to: FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (c/o M. Kashio), Maliwan Mansion, 39 Phra Atit Road, Bangkok 10200, Thailand. Tel: + 662 281 7844; Fax: + 662 280 0445; E-mail: fao-rap@field.fao.org

**IUCN Guidelines for Re-introductions** IUCN (1998) IUCN/SSC Re-introduction Specialist Group. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK, 1998. 12 pp. ISBN 2-8317-0448-0

These guidelines provide more detailed protocols than the previous 1987 IUCN Position Statement on the Translocation of Living Organisms and were developed in response to an increasing demand from reintroduction practitioners. Available in Arabic/English, Chinese/English, French/English, Russian/English, Spanish/English and English only, they can be obtained from Pritpal S. Soorae, Technical Project Officer, IUCN/SSC

Re-introduction Specialist Group, African Wildlife Foundation, PO Box 48177 Nairobi, Kenya. Fax: + 254 2 710372; E-mail: psoorae@awfke.org

**Tapirs: Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan** by Brooks, D.M., Bodmer, R.E. & Matola, S. (compilers) (1997) IUCN/SSC Tapir Specialist Group. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. 164 pp. ISBN 2-8317-0422-7. Available from: IUCN Publications Services Unit, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL, UK. Tel: + 44 (0) 1223 277 894. Fax: + 44 (0)1223 277175; E-mail: iucn-psu@wcmc.org.uk

Of the four extant species of tapir, three are the largest endemic wild animals in the Neotropics, and the only non-introduced perissodactyls in the western hemisphere; the other is a Malaysian endemic. All are threatened by habitat destruction and hunting. This book contains chapters on the natural history of tapirs and their important role as seed dispersers, as well as chapters on each species with conservation recommendations. An appendix describes seven tapir projects that need urgent support—three of them for mountain tapirs, which are the most endangered of the four species. The action plan is in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

**Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Europe** by Gasc, J.-P., Cabela, A., Crnobrnja-Isailovic, J., Dolmen, D., Grossenbacher, K., Haffner, P., Lescure, J., Martens, H., Martínez Rica, J.P., Maurin, H., Oliveira, M.E., Sofianidou, T.S., Veith, M. & Zuiderwijk, A. (eds) (1997) Societas Europaea Herpetologica & Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris. 496 pp. ISBN 2-86515-103-4. *Sales:* For France from Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Service des Publications Scientifiques-Diffusion, 57 rue Cuvier, F-75231, Paris. Tel: + 33 (1) 4079 3700; Fax: + 33 (1) 4079 3840; E-mail: dhenry@mnhn.fr. FF380.00 including postage. For other countries from Universal Book Services, Dr W. Backhuys, PO Box 321, 2300 AH Leiden, The Netherlands. Tel: + 31 71 517 0208; Fax: + 31 71 517 1856; E-mail: backhuys@euronet.nl; Dfl 124/\$US65 + VAT + postage.

This atlas is the result of more than 15 years' work. The four introductory chapters include one on conservation, which says that further declines and impending extinctions are probable unless herpetofauna conservation receives a fair share of the nature conservation resource budget. Each species—62 amphibians and 123 reptiles—is given a double page spread with map, scientific and common names, distribution, population status and conservation problems. There are more than 1300 references.

**Partridges & Francolins: Their Conservation, Breeding and Management** by Robbins, G.E.S. (1998)  
World Pheasant Association, PO Box 5, Lower Basildon, Reading, Berkshire RG8 9PF, UK. HB £24.95 + 2.50 postage UK and overseas surface mail. Tel: + 44 (0) 118 984 5140; Fax: + 44 (0) 118 984 3369; E-mail: wpa@gn.apc.org

The Old World francolins and partridges comprise 92 species, with the forests of eastern Asia holding most of the more threatened species. This book discusses the role of captive breeding in the research and conservation of these birds, and details the design of aviaries and techniques for captive management and husbandry. A taxon advisory group (Gallitag) has been established to co-ordinate breeding programmes within the British Isles and to liaise with other interest groups. The book includes a checklist and summary species accounts including avicultural notes where available. The species are illustrated with colour photographs or paintings.

**Losing Strands in the Web of Life: Vertebrate Declines and the Conservation of Biological Diversity** by Tuxill, J. (1998) WorldWatch Paper 141. ISBN 1-878071-43-2

**Beyond Malthus: Sixteen Dimensions of the Population Problem** by Brown, L.R., Gardner, G. & Halweil, B. (1998) WorldWatch Paper 143. 89 pp. ISBN 1-878071-45-9. World Watch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 2036-1904, USA

These two publications are among the most recent of this series, which aims to provide in-depth, quantitative and qualitative analysis of the major issues affecting prospects for a sustainable society.