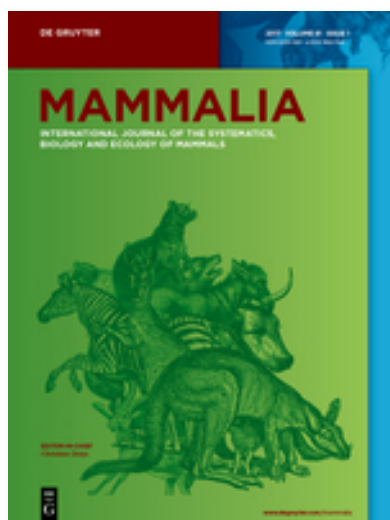


Gorilla society: conflict, compromise,
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Book reviews

Gorilla society. Conflict, compromise and cooperation between sexes

By **A.H. Harcourt and K.J. Stewart**

University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2007
XVIII+459 pp.
Price: \$30.00, £19.00
ISBN: 0226316033

A.H. Harcourt, a well-known professor of anthropology at the University of California, has published papers on gorillas since 1978 and K.J. Stewart has worked with him since 1987. After three decades of studies on the species, this book provides much more information than its title suggests. It is organised in five parts that include 14 chapters: 1. Introduction: Primate socioecology; competition versus grouping; predation and grouping. 2. Distribution, taxonomy and biology of *Gorilla*; ecology; diet; societies. 3. Female strategies; cooperation and competition; influence of males (protection against predators and infanticide by other males); female emigration and choice of males; conflict and competition between the sexes. 4. Male strategies; relations with females; mating strategies. 5. The future of *Gorilla* societies; conservation, references; index. It is illustrated with black and white photographs, diagrams and maps. Although the title and subtitle may appear restrictive, this is a full and definitive study of *Gorilla* biology. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 make comparisons with the other great apes (*Pongo* and *Pan*). This is the third great work on gorillas after those of G. Schaller and D. Fossey. The conclusion addresses the problems of conservation, the role of human pressure, and the main causes of degradation and impoverishment of the natural world.

Michel Cuisin

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Windows on nature. The great habitat dioramas of the American Museum of Natural History

By **S.C. Quinn**

Abrams/H.N. Abrams, New York, 2006
180 pp.
Price: \$40.00
ISBN: 0810959402

Dioramas provide far more information than photographs and are the best means to show small but significant parts of natural ecosystems. Those presented in the Museum of Natural History in New York are probably the best known. S.C. Quinn, who works in the exhibition

department of this museum, provides a history of the concept of dioramas (first devised by the Frenchman L. Daguerre in 1822). In America, the first diorama showing a muskrat habitat was created in 1889 in the Milwaukee Museum. The great era of dioramas began at the end of 19th century and finished when television became available in the 1950s. The history of dioramas (pp. 8–23) is followed by illustrations of more 150 dioramas in the New York Museum. F. Chapman, a well-known ornithologist at the museum, was instrumental in their creation and made numerous trips with painters, sculptors, hunters and naturalists to obtain the necessary specimens. The text gives an account of these expeditions and the work carried out by all the specialists who prepared the dioramas, with numerous black and white photos showing them at work. Despite the availability of television and photographs, dioramas made a reappearance at the New York Museum in 2005 because they show prehistoric scenes, a subject that is attracting increasing numbers of people. The book also lists the dioramas presented in the halls of the New York Museum (pp. 166–169). This magnificent album emphasises the efforts of artists in presenting the natural richness and biodiversity of the world.

Michel Cuisin

Conservation of Australia's forest fauna. 2nd edition

Edited by **D. Lunney**

Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales, Mosman, 2004
XIV+1074 pp.
Price: AU\$75.00
ISBN: 0-958 6085-8-X

The first edition (1991) was small in comparison with this second one, which is huge. The editor has studied the forest mammals in a nature reserve over a period of 35 years to determine how their populations react as trees grow. In this handbook, authored by more than 100 biologists, the 62 chapters are grouped in four parts: 1. Present situation of Australian forests; fauna conservation; forest politics; the case of birds, invertebrates, molluscs, Echidna, reptiles, amphibians and marsupials. 2. Forest fragmentation; rainforest of Queensland; impact of forestry practices; bird communities. 3. Case studies on koala, *Dasyurus maculatus*, possum, phascogale, gliding squirrel, frogs and bats. 4. Management of forest fauna; effects of fire and grazing; influence of plant disease; monitoring biodiversity; conservation; and education. Each chapter begins with a summary. As stressed by the editor, the Australian State of the Forestry Report of 2003 gives a new definition of forest: "a space where

About the article

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