

BOOK REVIEW

"Creative Conservation". Edited by P.J.S. Olney, G.M. Mace and A.T.C. Feistner. Chapman & Hall, London, 1994. ISBN 0 412 49570 8. 517 pages. 55 (sterling).

This book is subtitled "Interactive Management of wild and Captive Animals" and is based primarily on the Proceedings of the sixth world conference on breeding endangered species, held in Jersey (Channel Isles) in 1992.

The theme of the book is that the preservation and management of habitat and species in the wild are increasingly linked with breeding endangered animals in captivity. The editors and contributors seek to answer some of the many difficult questions that arise from this interaction. Part one deals with General issues, such as species extinctions, biodiversity, molecular genetics of endangered species, reproductive technologies and disease risks associated with wildlife translocation projects. Many of these involve veterinary surgeons and animal scientists. Part two covers reintroduction and captive breeding.

Part three focusses on case studies, ranging from the captive breeding of invertebrates and fish to reintroduction programmes for canids and black-footed ferrets.

Part four is concerned with Regional approaches to conservation and captive breeding and gives examples from the

Philippines, New Zealand, venezuela and vietnam but not, regrettably from Africa. There are very few photographs in the book, but numerous diagrams and tables, extensive bibliographies and a comprehensive index.

Conservation of the globe and rational, sustainable, utilization of its natural resources are important issues today and the veterinarian has much to contribute, both professionally and as a (privileged) educated person.

However, this book is also of particular relevance to the veterinary profession in Africa where so many animal and plant species abound, where habitat is under continuous threat and where there are pressing human needs.

An integrated programme for conservation is essential if wild (free living) species are to survive without jeopardizing the livelihood and well being of local people. As H.R.H. the Princess Royal says in her preface to the book:"....it is quite obvious to me that sustainable economy depends on a balance with nature. The root cause behind the undernourished millions is the same as that which is behind the depletion of the animal kingdom. It's a situation which bodes ill for our planet and one which will require all of our skill and energy if life, human or otherwise, is to be sustained".

It is a disappointment to the reviewer that so few of the contributors to this volume originate from poorer countries. It would have been interesting and useful to have

their perspective on this topic. Nevertheless, the editors and authors are experienced and knowledgeable and almost without exception related their subject matter to the difficulties and needs of the "developing world".

The veterinary profession in East Africa is concerned with most of the issues discussed in this book because of its responsibilities for domestic livestock, food production, wildlife, and the health and welfare of animals in captivity. "Creative conservation" is not only interesting, informative and readable it is also of practical relevance to Tanzania and Africa as a whole.

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