BOOK REVIEWS

Adaptive Environmental Management: A Practitioner's Guide

Allan, R. and Stankey, G.H. (eds). 2009
Springer, Dordrecht and CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Victoria. 368 pp. Paperback
ISBN 978-0-643-09690-5
RRP AUD $120

MIKE CALVER[1]

As Stankey and Allan explain in their concise but informative introduction, "Adaptive management is characterized by both a compelling and intuitive simplicity (we learn by doing) as well as a growing sophisticated and elegant theoretical discourse." It offers the promise of using policy implementation to improve understanding of natural systems and thereby to direct future changes to policy and practice. The challenge for managers is to identify the operational practicalities that lie between the attractive concept and the theory. The aim of this book is to examine that challenge through case studies of the real-world application of adaptive management in a range of settings, including examples relevant to managers, policy makers and environmental scientists. The approach is not prescriptive, but rather to reflect on experience as a guide to future practice.

The editors assembled a diverse team of contributors able to offer insights into social, political and scientific considerations. It was refreshing to see contributions from experienced authors advanced in their careers, as well as current students, recent graduates and others richer in life experience than traditional qualifications. The authors and case studies also represented a wide range of countries: including, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Europe, reflecting on applications in a range of aquatic and terrestrial systems. If there are gaps, they lie in examples from developing countries and marine systems.

The content is organized effectively into five parts: understanding adaptive management, varying contexts, tools for adaptive management, the importance of people and a conclusion. Readers short on time but seeking a general understanding of adaptive management will benefit from the first and last parts, which are very successful in introducing the concepts and synthesizing the insights from individual chapters respectively. The chapter titles and abstracts are informative for those wishing to "cherry pick" papers on specific concepts or systems. There are also informative boxes after several chapters that explore important concepts concisely. The box "Words matter" would certainly elicit an enthusiastic cheer from a colleague of mine who has long argued the importance of language in discussing environmental issues. Many chapters are illustrated by effective black and white line drawings or photographs (for example, the excellent photographs showing vegetation recovery after camel exclusion on pp. 137–138), although the odd photograph was, in my opinion, too lacking in contrast to be useful. References are listed at the end of each chapter, which is very handy for instructors who wish to place specific chapters on reserve in libraries for student reading. I found the index thorough and helpful. Those new to the adaptive management jargon might have found a glossary useful too.

This book certainly belongs in the libraries of tertiary institutions offering degrees in natural resource management or environmental science. It will also be a valuable asset to professionals involved in environmental policy, management or science.

Amphibian Biology, Volume 8

Heathwole, H. and Wilkinson, J.W. (eds). 2009
Surrey Beatty & Sons, Baulkham Hills BC, NSW
330 pp. Paperback
ISBN 9780980311334
RRP AUD $96.00

FRANK LEMCKERT[2]

The Amphibian Biology book series being edited by Hal Heatwole and associates is becoming a major series of volumes that promises to cover all aspects of the biology and management of amphibians around the world. Such a series is very timely given the major declines in amphibians through the end of the last century and the continued declines through the early part of this century. Volume 8 is the latest book in this series and is the first of two volumes that provides coverage of agents implicated in declines that are thought to be associated with human actions. This volume is titled "Decline: Diseases, Parasites, Maladies and Pollution" and the related volume (Volume 10) will cover more direct human impacting activities such as fire, roads, landscape alteration and habitat destruction.

The first half of Volume 8 provides coverage of a range of recently recognized diseases of amphibians and includes detailed chapters covering viral and bacterial diseases, fungal diseases (especially chytridiomycosis) and Trematodes that cause declines and deformities. Also included in this group of chapters is a general discussion of amphibian deformities and another discussing the various factors that may influence susceptibility of different

[1]School of Biological Sciences and Biotechnology, Murdoch University, Murdoch, Western Australia, Australia, 6150 m.calver@murdoch.edu.au
[2]Senior Research Scientist, Forest and Rangeland Ecosystems, Industry and Investment NSW (formerly DPI), PO Box 100 Beecroft, NSW 2119, Australia