

LITERATURE CITED

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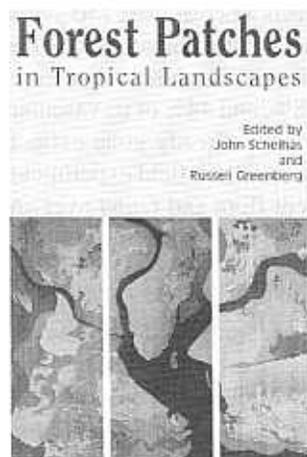
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Forest Patches in Tropical Landscapes. Schelhas, J., & Greenberg, R., (Eds), 1996. Island Press, Washington, D.C., xxxvi + 426 pp. ISBN 1 55963 425 1 (cloth); ISBN 1 55963 426 x (paper).

Less than a lifetime ago Southeast Asia was covered with apparently limitless forests. Today, except for New Guinea and perhaps Borneo, the only extensive forests are located in National Parks. Outside the parks, agriculture dominates the landscape. But set amid the sea of crops are small islands of forest. These contain the relics of the forest plant and animal community and are vital for maintaining the biodiversity of many areas of Southeast Asia, and other regions of the tropics.

This is the first book to investigate the ecological importance of forest patches in tropical landscapes and to analyze the options available for managing them sustainably and for the conservation of biodiversity. The book arose out of the involvement of Schelhas and Greenberg in a project concerning the importance of tropical forest patches for overwintering North American migrant birds. It contains nineteen papers which cover the fields of ecology, conservation biology, forestry and social anthropology. Birds are not noticeably pushed to the fore, but few papers concern areas outside South or Central America. The only papers with direct reference to the Asian tropics are Pinedo-Vazquez and Padoch on traditional forest-use and agricultural systems of Dayaks in Kalimantan and Poffenberger on the move to community-based forest management by tribals in parts of Eastern India.

The book can be divided into two roughly equal portions. The first eleven papers are mostly ecological in outlook. They provide, or review, data to show that forest patches support many species. The second half of the book focuses on forest use and management. The

emphasis is on local community involvement as the key to successful conservation programmes.

The quality of the papers is uniformly high, the selection offered is coherent and fully up-to-date in the material cited. Despite having little explicit reference to Southeast Asia, this is a book of direct relevance to all interested in the conservation of biodiversity in the region because, inevitably, forest patches will soon represent the only forest there is in many areas.

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The Amphibian Fauna of Sri Lanka. Dutta, S. K. & K. Manamendra-Arachchi, 1996. Wildlife Heritage Trust of Sri Lanka, 95 Cotta Road, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka. 230 pp., 269 figs. ISBN 955-9114-10-7.

The present book is a very impressive compilation of the amphibian fauna of Sri Lanka (the current name for Ceylon), documenting 53 known species of caecilians and anurans from five families. The last major study of this group had been by Parakrama Kirtisinghe (1957: *The Amphibia of Ceylon*, Colombo, 112 pp.) almost 40 years ago, and it has taken a long time for anyone to come up with an update.

And what an update Dutta and Manamendra-Arachchi's book is. All the species have been treated very systematically, with a short (but quite effective diagnosis), a "clinical" description of the salient features, and sections on their live colours, taxonomy, distribution, etymology (even old names) and material examined. The maps of their distributions are crisp and well executed, with spot localities and not the irritating and uninformative broad generalisations so often seen. The section on material examined is most welcomed, especially for taxonomists, although it is frequently left out by many authors (or publishers) for dubious page-saving reasons or considered as boring and unnecessary. Every figure is also accompanied by specimen data, which again, is all too often "conveniently excluded" as being "unimportant". Almost all species accounts are accompanied by colour figures based on living specimens, most of which are of excellent quality. Live colours are an invaluable aid in identifying many frog species (especially rhacophorids like *Philautus*), and this should be a standard for all descriptions. In fact, many species are depicted with multiple photographs to show colour variations, which makes the book even more useful. The type specimens of many species are also figured (in monochrome). The line drawings, when provided, are excellent, and show the intended specific features very well. Keys are provided for all species.