

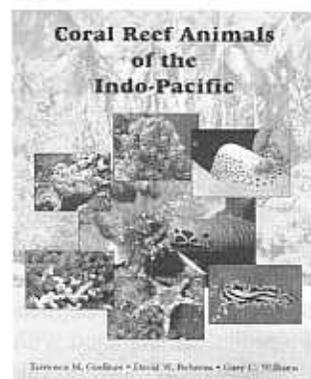
It is very clear from the text that the book has not been the result of "transferring bones from one graveyard to another" or based just on old, preserved material. The authors and their associates, who have been supported by the Wildlife Heritage Trust of Sri Lanka and World Wide Fund for Nature, have clearly done a great deal of field work and are intimately familiar with their subjects. The map of their collection sites bear testimony to this! Considering this, the book would have been even more useful if information and figures of their larvae (when available) had been provided.

The number of endemic taxa for Sri Lanka is very high, which is not surprising, with 30 species (about 57% of the known amphibian fauna) known only from the island. All three species of caecilians are known only from Sri Lanka (including the famous but often taxonomically confused *Ichthyophis glutinosus*) as are about half the microhylids, bufonids and ranids. The Rhacophoridae (tree frogs), not surprisingly, contains the most number of endemic species, with 14 of the 18 species (about 78%) being unique to Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, the conservation of these endemic species were discussed all too briefly, although the current threats to amphibians in general were discussed.

One part of the book also worth highlighting is the appendix, which briefly notes key features and figures in colour, 16 unidentified species, most of which (as the authors imply) are new taxa or at least new for Sri Lanka. The diversity of amphibians for the island is thus probably much higher than what is known at present. With the current spotlight on rainforest diversity and the crisis in many amphibian populations, the publication of this book on Sri Lankan Amphibia is most timely, and the authors must be congratulated for producing this fine tome.

Peter K. L. Ng

School of Biological Sciences,
National University of Singapore.



Coral Reef Animals of the Indo-Pacific: Animal Life from Africa to Hawai'i Exclusive of the Vertebrates. Terrence M. Gosliner, David W. Behrens & Gary C. Williams, 1996. Sea Challengers, 4 Sommerset Rise, Monterey, CA 93940, U.S.A. vi+314pp. ISBN 0-930118-21-9

This eagerly awaited volume is a magnificent successor to Dave and Jenny George's illustrated encyclopedia of marine invertebrate life produced some 17 years ago. More than 1100 common (and not so common) tropical Indo-Pacific species are superbly illustrated in full colour (the work of more than 50 skilled underwater photographers) together with valuable data on identification, natural history and geographic distribution. Where species have been scientifically described the authority is given; this and the biogeographic information makes this book highly useful to the professional marine

invertebrate zoologist, as well as to amateur divers and underwater photographers. The focus is on the tropical western Pacific and the Indo-Malay Archipelago but the wide distribution of many Indian Ocean species brings them within the scope of this book.

The introductory chapters are extremely well written, so well written in fact that they could form the introductory basis for a graduate course on reef ecology. The only point I would take issue with is the use of the term "Coelenterata" instead of the currently accepted "Cnidaria" for the phylum which includes corals. "Cnidaria" is appropriate since all these animals have stinging cells known as cnidocytes (not nematocysts : these are the stinging capsules within the cnidocytes). But these are only very minor points. Coral, the first word in the title, is a term often loosely applied to a wide variety of animals and it is pleasing to see that the authors have clearly defined and described the various types of cnidarian corals.

This excellent work and its subsequent editions will prove invaluable to 'students' of biodiversity for years to come. I intend to purchase a second copy, one for use in the field and one to keep in pristine condition on my bookshelves.

David J. W. Lane

School of Biological Sciences
National University of Singapore



Rhythm of the Sea: The Life and Times of Labrador Beach. Shirley S. L. Lim, Peter K. L. Ng, Leo W. N. Tan & Wee Yeow Chin. Published by Division of Biology, Nanyang Technological University and Department of Zoology, National University of Singapore, 160pp, ISBN891-00-5387-8

Labrador Beach forms the coastal margin of Labrador Park, a nature reserve established to protect the habitat of the primitive, rare fern, *Dipteris conjugata*. This 375m of southern coastline, trapped between a power station and a naval base, is the last remaining example of rocky intertidal habitat on the main island of Singapore. The book briefly

covers the history of the area and includes a short section on the flora of the park, but the main focus is the marine fauna associated with the beach bordering the park. Since the book covers a wide variety of animals and plants it could serve as an introduction to the kinds of organisms likely to be found in similar habitats in the region of Singapore.

The book is richly illustrated by many excellent colour photographs of the flora and fauna, many of which are close-up pictures which be useful for their identification. Each caption is extensive and contains interesting insights into the biology of each organism. From the front cover which has a nice close-up of a porcelain crab, *Petrolisthes*, we know what the main subject of the book is going to be - crabs! In fact almost a third of the close-ups are of crab-like animals and more than a half of them are crustaceans, no doubt reflecting