

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.

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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

the main interests of the authors. This is not a serious defect in the book because it will introduce readers to the fascinating branch of Zoology known as Carcinology. However I think that some of the colour photos (e.g. on pp. 33, 38, 53, 57, 105, 115, & 145) have not been reproduced well and probably do not do justice to the originals.

The lively text is organised into small bite-sized chunks with catchy titles. Try some of these for size: Life at the Top (supralittoral animals which take the heat, feed with their feet or are spirits of the night), The Drifters (of the microscopic and not musical kind), Filter Feeding: Tapping the Soup (includes many examples of animals feeding on fine particles e.g. sponging a living), The Garbage Men (the more politically correct Garbage Persons doesn't have quite the right ring to it for cleaner-upper hermit crabs, the gentle cleaner shrimps, the fiddler and soldier crabs who live off the muck), Eat Me if you Dare (aposematic animals such as the poisonous crab, *Lophozozymus pictor*), Operation Team Spirit: the Business of Mutualism (cooperation of snapping shrimps and fish, anemones and clown fish who are just good friends), Living off Others: the Business of Parasitism (a politically correct title serving as a warning for Singapore readers who are given the parable of the nasty effects of barnacle parasites and other free-loaders), The Innovators (designed to provide animal examples of the virtuous life for Singaporeans such as the leaf-carrying porter crab, super glued barnacles, can-opening crabs with powerful chelipeds and false-eyed butterfly fish), The Master Camouffleurs (providing examples of the expected dress code used by decorator crabs, and the latest fashion in hats among sponge crabs), and finally The Mating Game (pregnant male seahorses, and the methods used by *Uca vocans* to flag down a wife). If these don't make readers want to know more about the intimacies of marine life, then I don't know what will! Each chapter and photo caption is packed with all sorts of fascinating facts about the private lives of the animals who call Labrador Beach home. There are lessons here for both the novice and the initiated.

Singaporeans whose only experience of nature in the raw has been Underwater World on Sentosa, Jurong Bird Park, or the Zoo, now know that they can see a wide variety of animals for free at Labrador Beach. But how long will this last? Conservation of the marine environment requires the care and concern of not just the few but everyone. Marine animals are resilient but they need a safe place to live and if Labrador Beach is not protected then Underwater World might be the only place where Singaporeans can go to see them.

British Petroleum Singapore and the Port of Singapore Authority have received excellent value for their sponsorship of this book. I hope that all the directors of these bodies read the book and also realize that their future decisions will largely determine the health of Singapore's marine environment. Labrador Park was a site for massive gun emplacements defending Singapore against the Japanese in World War II. Hopefully Labrador Beach will aid in the defence of Singapore's marine environment more successfully than the guns. I think that this book is pointed in the right direction!

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