

## Book Review

THE PINNIPEDS—SEALS, SEA LIONS AND WALRUSES. Marianne Riedman. University of California Press, Berkeley/Los Angeles, Oxford. 1990. ISBN 0-520-06497-6. 439 pp. Price \$29.95.

Having just read reviews of the *Handbook of Marine Mammals*, volume 4, I looked forward to this book as performing a similar task for the Pinnipeds. Unfortunately, despite a well produced volume, informative, end-covers, glossary, lengthy bibliography and a plethora of photographs, this is not in the same class. Indeed, as the author makes quite plain in her preface, 'This book . . . was written as a general introduction . . . for the student and interested general reader'. Having said that, one is left with the feeling that she then lost her way. For example, which 'general reader' can distinguish a 'mysticete' from an 'odontocete'?—neither term being defined in the glossary, unlike 'locomotion', 'fjord', 'the bends' or 'estuary', which terms are, but with which many 'general readers' might well be familiar. It does offend slightly to read about 'natality' when 'birthrate' has covered the same situation for many years and is universally understood, needing no place in the glossary. Originally, I had hoped, after reading this book, to understand the differences between the Northern and the Southern Elephant Seals, but I am still in ignorance.

A comprehensive bibliography for the Genus *Sotalia* has been compiled by R. P. Terry at the Delft University of Technology. The bibliography contains all references to *Sotalia* that can be found in the literature for the past 20 years as well as selected papers prior to this time. In addition, the bibliography contains references to unpublished conference posters and presentations concerning the biology of *Sotalia*. Anyone interested in the genus or

Many authors neglect a comprehensive bibliography—which is such a good starting point for further study—this is not a criticism which could be levied here though one has doubts if the author has checked them all, otherwise she would have corrected the mistakes (e.g. Klinowska, *Aquatic Mammals* 1: 27–32 should have read *Aquatic Mammals* 11:1, 27–32) an annoying omission to the general reader trying to follow these up.

Perhaps the worst failing of this book is in the lack of relevance between many photographs and the text (e.g. 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.18, 1.22, 9.3, 9.4). One is left with the impression that the text was written without reference to the photographs and the latter were selected, not to illustrate the former, but because they were 'good shots'.

In summary, what a great pity that this book, with so much useful and interesting fact, should lose its way and although many people, including the students for whom it was written, will find it a fascinating tome, the reviewer is sad that a chance was missed to educate properly and satisfy a wider readership. Perhaps a second, and revised edition could do just that.

V. J. A. Manton,  
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topics related to the genus can receive a copy of the bibliography by writing to:

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2600 GA Delft, The Netherlands.

Andrew Greenwood asks me to remind readers that the above book, and many more, may be obtained at competitive rates from Chiron Publications, P.O. Box 25, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD22 9UA, UK.