

vance of the book to a wider potential audience. While highlighting the differences among species, this chapter underlines the shared threats to their survival in a world where food is limited and where persecution by man has often driven them to the brink of extinction. The bulk of the text deals with the nuts and bolts of otter ecology—habitats, social organization, behavior, diet, and challenges to survival. These aspects of otter life are neatly summarized in Chapter 13, where readers are encouraged to ponder what is special about otters.

As with every publication of this type, the quality, depth, and interest varies across the chapters. However, I particularly enjoyed Chapter 9, which discussed otter fishing—the different strategies and difficulties faced by individual species were staggering. Similarly engaging was Chapter 14, which provides an overview of conservation management issues—the photograph of the otter trap is a grizzly reminder of the very real threats still posed by man. Overall, the text is not at all stuffy and will appeal to professional ecologists as well as the general public. This is achieved by liberal seasoning throughout of fascinating anecdotes about encounters the author has had with many of the otter species described in the book. A generous helping of photographs and illustrations are also provided to lighten the text.

Otters: Ecology, Behaviour and Conservation will be an indispensable guide to one of our most alluring and enigmatic mammals.

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INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN PRIMATES: BEHAVIOR, ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTION. *Oxford Series in Ecology and Evolution*.

By Charles L Nunn and Sonia Altizer. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. \$99.50 (hardcover); \$49.50 (paper). xii + 384 p; ill.; index. ISBN: 0-19-856584-4 (hc); 0-19-856585-2 (pb). 2006.

For its emphasis on phylogenetic comparative methods and evolutionary interpretations, this new book, *Infectious Diseases in Primates*, might as easily have been entitled *Comparative Evolutionary Ecology of Parasitism in Primates*. The nine chapters of this logically structured volume will appeal to ecologists, evolutionary biologists, primatologists, and especially to students in these fields who seek a better understanding of disease biology, epidemiological principles, and comparative evolutionary analyses. This is a book by and for evolutionary biologists, and less so for students of the clinical sciences who need a reference on the individual characteristics of primate pathogens.

The early chapters of the volume summarize information on basic pathogen biology, primate social systems, mammalian immunity, and fundamental concepts in infectious disease epidemiology, evolution, and mathematical modeling. Later chapters synthesize these themes by advancing the argument that infection has driven the evolution of such fundamental aspects of primate sociality as group size, group composition, and mating systems. Chapters on infection and primate conservation, and on diseases of humans in a comparative perspective, round out this theme.

Perhaps the greatest strength of this book is the repeated attempt by the authors to define the full spectrum of hypotheses and areas for future research that would address key shortcomings in our understanding of how infection influences primate biology and conservation. Explicit hypotheses and their associated predictions appear in the text and in tables throughout, as well as is the subject of the final chapter, leaving, in the end, few ideas not articulated. This "laying it on the line" approach is admirable, and Nunn and Altizer rightly push the field from the parasite-host lists of the past to the hypothesis testing of the future. Nevertheless, the paucity of specific case studies from wild primates in this volume and elsewhere in the literature illustrates that much remains unknown about the diversity of agents infecting primates (including humans), and that the important task of cataloging is far from complete. On the whole, the book is highly successful in its goal of synthesizing this emerging field of study, and of drawing attention to an important and generally underappreciated force in the evolution of the exceptionally diverse mammalian order Primates.

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WILDLIFE OF NORTH AMERICA: A NATURALIST'S LIFELIST.

By Whit Bronaugh. Gainesville (Florida): University Press of Florida. \$29.95. xxiii + 565 p; ill.; indexes to scientific and common names. ISBN: 0-8130-3012-9. 2006.

This volume provides naturalists with a reasonably priced, hardcover book in which most of the pages are devoted to lists of species with space for notes on date, place, and behavior adjacent to the species name. This is a convenient means of keeping a record of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, freshwater fishes, butterflies, dragonflies, and damselflies that one encounters on field excursions. As a