

BOOK REVIEWS

THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY TEAM OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS. 2000. **The Marshall Islands, Living Atolls Amidst the Living Seas: The National Biodiversity Report of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.** (ISBN 982-9045-02-1, pbk.) St. Hildegard Publishing Company. Santa Clarita, CA 85719, U.S.A. Price not given, 345 pp, numerous illustrations, 8 1/2" × 11".

During the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, the Republic of the Marshall Islands was among the first to sign the Convention on Biodiversity. Consequently, the Republic sanctioned a report on the biota of its atolls with the hope of raising public awareness to the various aspects of biodiversity. The goal of this report is to "provide background about the Marshall Islands, its history, especially in relation to plants, animals and ecosystems, to give an overview of its biodiversity and biological resources" (p.3). It is mainly a compilation of biological information previously published by other scientists, place in a single format, thereby making it more accessible to the residents of the Marshall Islands. Even the writing style is informal, "with the idea of making the information available to all sorts of people, even high school students."

While on the surface this book might seem appropriate for only a small target audience, only a brief look into this book reveals many informative features. Many of the organisms are illustrated, such as the reef crab and giant grouper, with the Marshallese name and derivation provided. Text boxes featuring a special topic present important biological concepts. A section on "What is a Coral" informs the reader about the different groups of corals and coral-like organisms. Likewise, a section on endemism defines the topic and the term "invasive species" is discussed in some detail.

The first part of the book is comprised of three chapters, which deal with the history of the Marshall Islands and its people, biological resources, and threats to biodiversity. Chapter one begins with a short historical account of the Marshall Islands and its people, history about the formation of the Marshall Island atolls and their relatively recent colonization by terrestrial life only 3,000-4,000 years ago. Furthermore, the detrimental effects people have had on the atolls, with the introduced plants and animals they brought, has resulted in the extinction of several species, including the endemic flightless Wake rail, the purple-capped fruit dove and the Micronesian pigeon. The history of government reveals that the Marshalls have been under the control of several countries, including Germany, Japan and the United States, before becoming their own commonwealth in 1990 and joining the United Nations. This chapter also provides information on the individual atolls comprising the Marshalls, with the Marshallese names of each, the number of square land miles they occupy, and brief historical information.

Chapter two, entitled "Biodiversity and Biological Resources," gives a brief overview of the ecosystems on the Marshall Islands, listing each by plant community and including information on location, importance, status and threats. Following is a concise overview of the biota of the Islands, divided into plants and animals, with tables to give quick information about total number of species, percent native species, percent endemism, number of threatened and endangered species, etc. The fragility of these islands and invasive nature of newly arrived exotics is evident in these tables, since only 18% of vascular plants and 23% of animals are native.

Chapter three deals with current and historical threats to biodiversity, which include nuclear testing, the invasion of exotics, changes in population and lifestyle of the native people and global climate change.

The second half of the book is dedicated to tables and lists of biota. Separate tables are included for plants, pulmonate and non-marine mullosks, spiders, insects, fish, reptiles and amphibians, birds, and mammals. For each of the species in these tables, scientific name, English name, Marshallese

name, status and traditional uses are reported. Next, information on biota deemed worthy of conservation concerns with definitions of conservation terminology (example: threatened vs. endangered). In addition, a table of endemic species, one on pestiferous and invasive species and those species protected by Marshall Island law ease the reader in identifying biota of critical importance. Illustrations are found throughout the book, often with scientific and Marshallese name, and five color figures with keys to identify the organisms in an important community, such as a coral reef. These illustrations enhance the book's properties, helping reader appreciate the biodiversity on the Marshall Islands.—Amy Trauth Nare, *Botanical Research Institute of Texas*, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX, 76102 U.S.A., amy_trauth@yahoo.com.

CHARLES H. SMITH. 2000. **Biodiversity Studies: A Bibliographic Review**. (ISBN 0-8108-3754-4, hbk.) Scarecrow Press, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706, U.S.A. <http://www.scarecrowpress.com> (Orders: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 15200 NBN Way, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214-0191, U.S.A., 800-462-6420). \$69.00, 449 pp, 5 1/2" × 8 1/2".

Charles H. Smith, Science Librarian and Associate Professor of Library Public Services at Western Kentucky University, cites literature both on the biological study of diversity itself, and on the socio-natural science of diversity conservation. His effort has received two very prestigious recognitions. His work was listed in *Library Journal's* Best Reference Sources for 2000, and it won the biannual 2001 Oberly Award for Bibliography in the Agricultural or Natural Sciences.

Two bibliographies are included in this work. Bibliography I, "Books and Articles," lists approximately 1,200 monographs and 4,500 articles, while Bibliography II, "Special Issues," provides a selective accounting of special issues of journals/serials dealing exclusively with biodiversity in all aspects. His emphasis is on the literature of the investigation of biodiversity, the written record of efforts to measure, understand, monitor, and preserve it. Some self-imposed restrictions had to be considered during his exhaustive literature search, which included over one hundred electronic databases and an equal number of print bibliographies and references cited lists. Because of space limitations individual papers appearing in edited collections were excluded, as were electronic sources, theses, dissertations, reference works, systematic or floral/faunal revisions, and juvenile literature. Almost every entry in the list is in the English language. What is featured is the primary literature of biodiversity-directed natural science, social science, and humanities subjects, with a select amount of science journalism. Coverage centers on the period 1986 to 1998, but extends to many works published prior to that date that remain relevant to trends occurring during it.

His basic goal was to provide as much information as possible in as little space as possible for each entry. Each citation is enhanced with bibliometric ratings, brief annotations, and/or a list of descriptive "added terms." The bibliometric rating for journals appears as a 1 to 3 scale according to the average number of times they have been listed as cited over a several- to ten- or twelve-year period in the combined *Citation Index* portions of *Science Citation Index*, *Social Sciences Citation Index*, and *Humanities Citation Index*. Monographs are rated on the same 1–3 scale but on three different factors: (1) the number of OCLC libraries who hold the item; (2) number of times the work was reviewed after publication; and (3) number of citations it has generated. Both ratings appear in brackets after the pagination in the citation. An "Honors" list appears in his introduction for the ten most frequently mentioned publishers and the twelve serial publications most frequently cited. The addition of the bibliometric ratings makes this bibliography not only unique but also especially useful due to its analysis of the relative importance or value of each entry.

The three indexes, covering general, geographical, and organismal subjects, respectively, generate over 20,000 referrals to the items in the bibliography. Index I is alphabetically arranged by subject. Index II is divided into nine regional lists. Index III contains nine taxonomic lists. The indexing features many cross-referrals because so many of the significant concepts in the developing field



Nare, Amy Trauth. 2002. "The Marshall Islands, Living Atolls Amidst the Living Seas: The National Biodiversity Report of the Republic of the Marshall Islands by The national Biodiversity Team of the Republic of the Marshall Islands." *SIDA, contributions to botany* 20, 867–868.

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