

Conservation and Development in Irian Jaya: A Strategy for Rational Resource Utilization

Ronald G. Petocz

Brill, Leiden, 1989, 218 pp., SB \$75

After 6 years of living in Irian Jaya (Indonesian New Guinea) as the Project Leader for the WWF Irian Jaya programme, few if any know more than Ron Petocz (pronounced 'Peters') about the natural resources and the development pressures facing them in this, the most exceptional of Indonesia's 27 provinces. We therefore stand in his debt for having produced such an authoritative and complete text with attractive illustrations and maps by George Raspado. The book has a chequered history, having appeared in its first edition as a publication of WWF/IUCN in Indonesia in 1984. An Indonesian version was published in 1987. The first edition has been much-photocopied in country, but this new book is updated and revised.

Irian Jaya is one of the last wild places on earth and has a famed physical and biological diversity with the tropics' only glacier, vast torrid swamps, unspoilt coral reefs, traditional tribal people, an unforgettable expanse of forest—as well as one of the world's most profitable (and highest) mines, pockets of Javanese transmigrant settlers, logging operations and industrial tree plantations.

It used to be difficult, or at least expensive, to reach, but now that the airport on Biak Island just north of the 'mainland' is open to the largest Pacific-crossing jets, a small but growing and regular influx of visitors has begun.

The book is divided into two parts; the first quarter describes

the geological, biological, and historical background to the province as well as the principles governing the design of the protected area system. The bulk of the book is termed the 'Action Plan' comprising the needs for establishing and coordinating responsibilities for the protected area system, the special needs of certain species (such as crocodiles, birds of paradise and parrots, giant clam, and butterflies), the development factors of immediate concern to conservation (such as logging, mining, transmigration and resettlement), the development of conservation support systems (such as public awareness, tourism and legal aspects, and training), and the role of international donor agencies.

Maybe other broad and informed books on conservation and development in specific areas like this do exist, but I have not come across them. I join Ron Petocz in hoping that the book (in both its language versions) will influence the paths of conservation and development in Irian Jaya and act as a model for other priceless regions. As ever, the price put on it by Brill is ridiculous and cannot but hamper its effective dissemination.

Tony Whitten.

Rainforest Politics: Ecological Destruction in South-east Asia

Philip Hurst

Zed Books, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU, 1990, 303 pp., HB £32.95, SB £10.95

This is an original and very readable book in which the environmental, human and economic consequences of forest loss are explored in detail for six South East Asian countries—Indonesia, East and West

Malaysia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and Burma. These countries hold between them just over one-fifth of the world's tropical rain forest and each of them is experiencing apparently uncontrollable loss of valuable and potentially renewable forest resources. The roles of governments, donors and the private sector are examined, and no conclusion is drawn without an ostensibly thorough review of the available information.

The major failing of the book is its innumerable factual mistakes, some important, some less so, and the degree to which much of the information is out of date. The author returned from 18 months' of fieldwork and data collection 3 years before this book was published. He would have served himself, the countries, and the reader well had he asked some of those active in the forestry issues of the country to review the manuscript. Had this been done, however, a great deal of revision would have been required. It would be churlish to pick on any of the mistakes in particular but they cover scientific fact, 'half-truths' and the spelling of local names and individuals. In his foreword Jonathan Porritt writes that the book 'will be of benefit to all those seeking the actual facts (sic) behind the myths'; the facts' should be checked before they are repeated.

Despite these shortcomings, the final chapter, 'Common Factors: A Regional View' is sound if, again, somewhat dated. By teasing out the factors such as the presence of absence of a colonial past, style of religion, political system, and stage of industrialization the conclusion is reached that economic straitjackets have been the cause of forest loss, and ways are suggested, based

on the 'alternative' Tropical Forest Action Plan proposed by the World Rainforest Movement, in which the straps might be untied. His final sentence is, 'In the end, however, it is pointless to tell the Third World to stand on its own two feet when we in the West continue to stand on its hands.'
Tony Whitten.

Painted Wolves: Wild Dogs of the Serengeti-Mara

Jonathan Scott

Hamish Hamilton, London, 1991, 233 pp., HB £25.00

It may seem odd, at first, that Jonathan Scott feels the need to Anglicize the Latin *Lycaon pictus* (*Lycaon* means wolf; *pictus* means painted or ornate) and rebaptize the species the 'African painted wolf'. After all, the species is more commonly known as the wild dog, or Cape hunting dog. But the wild dog is neither 'wild' (in either the sense of vicious or feral), nor is it closely related to the dog that sits by the fire. And sadly, *Lycaon pictus* has not been sighted anywhere near the Cape for decades. African painted wolf, however, does describe the striking colouration and instantly identifies the species as the ecological replacement for the true wolf, *Canis lupus*, south of the Sahara.

But there is more in a name than its meaning. By emphasizing in his title, and in the common name, the beauty of the species, Scott foreshadows the not-so-hidden agenda of the book: to convince the world that painted wolves, rather than being 'vicious killers', are elegant animals deserving of our attention. Scott fulfils his agenda admirably. This book combines extensive and remarkable photographic illustrations (which won him the

BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year in 1987) with a wealth of scientific data. Scott writes clearly without diluting information, providing the reader with an accurate and entertaining description of painted-wolf biology in the plains of the Serengeti-Mara. He frequently refers to his collaboration with scientists working in the Serengeti-Mara and it is this collaboration that helps bring the book to life. This is the story of not just a single pack of dogs, but of the biology and future conservation of a species living in one of the world's best studied and most spectacular ecosystems

For decades, African wild dogs have been subject to greater persecution than any other large predator in Africa. This persecution—as Scott demonstrates elegantly with an abundance of historical quotations—results from their method of hunting. Disembowelling one's prey is both messy and, to human observers, 'cruel'. As a result, this species has been extirpated in 19 of 32 countries in which they were once found (Ginsberg and Macdonald, 1990): they are uncommonly rare in all but a few countries. As there are probably fewer wild dogs in protected areas than black rhinos in Africa (Fanshawe *et al.*, pp. this issue), time is running out for the painted wolf.

Not since van Lawick and van Lawick-Goodall's *Innocent Killers* (1970) and Hugo van Lawick's *Solo* (1973) have wild dogs, or painted wolves, had such an eloquent advocate. The Serengeti-Mara is not, perhaps, the last best hope for painted wolves in Africa (larger populations exist in Kruger National Park in South Africa, north-eastern Botswana, Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe,

and Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania). But *Painted Wolves: Wild Dogs of the Serengeti-Mara*, in its abundance of detail and visual distinction, will draw attention to the plight of wild dogs across Africa.

References

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The Mountain Gorilla

Boyd Norton

Swan Hill Press, Airlife Publishing, Shrewsbury, 1990, 128 pp., HB £16.95

Books on the mountain gorilla are becoming frequent but this is one of the good ones. The photographs are truly evocative and a real effort has been made to set the historical background of gorilla conservation and to encompass the many and varied issues.

These issues include the ambiguities, particularly regarding tourism. Boyd Norton is evidently pro-tourism (and indeed visits as a tourist himself) but is anxious about the risks involved and particularly that of transferring disease from humans to gorillas. I am glad he highlights this problem because it is one that all people coming into contact with the gorillas must be aware of. It must be said, however,