

makes a virology textbook case that the spread and increase of deadly strains of malaria in South America were brought by these projects and deforestation.

Ultimately, this fight for land that made Mendes so famous is a fight for global sustainability, minorities, environmental justice, ecology and science-based management. Currently, Brazil is still not achieving this goal, and the killing of Chico Mendes left us with stunning evidence of their failure.

This book leaves little to be desired, although some readers might be eager for more photographs and an index. The 14 pages of notes, appendices and resources

Ecology

By Michael L. Cain, William D. Bowman, and Sally D. Hacker. 2008. Sinauer Associates, Inc., 23 Plumtree Road, P.O. Box 407, Sunderland, Massachusetts 01375-0407 USA. 621 pages. 130 USD Cloth.

There is arguably no scientific discipline more diverse than ecology. This presents a serious challenge to anyone faced with teaching this subject at the undergraduate level. With their book *Ecology*, Michael Cain, William Bowman and Sally Hacker have risen to this challenge. Lavishly illustrated, and thoughtfully written, this book strikes a good balance between information content and accessibility, and I expect it will serve admirably as an introductory textbook.

The first section presents the physical and biological framework for life on earth: climate, physical environment, and biosphere. I was pleased to see they have included a chapter addressing the connection between ecology and evolution. The two disciplines have long been treated as separate domains within biology, but the distinction is more cultural than biological. Some of the most interesting recent work in either discipline is focussed on developing new ways to integrate evolutionary data in ecological analyses (and vice versa).

Subsequent sections are devoted to population ecology, including life history analysis; interspecific interactions, with separate chapters covering competition, predation, parasitism and mutualism; community ecology and biogeography; ecosystem ecology; and applied and large-scale ecology, including conservation biology, landscape ecology, and global ecology. Some of the material, particularly in the first section, is likely to overlap substantially with other lower year courses in biology and geography. However, having it all together in a single book provides the instructor with some flexibility in terms of the required background and review material for students. Each chapter begins and ends with a case study, providing context for the more conceptual content. The examples are generally fairly recent, taken from studies published in the last 10 years. The text itself is clearly written, and accompanied by eye-catching illustrations that clarify and expand on the prose. The authors boast that the illustrations stand on their own, and tell stories that can be

make it a well-rounded standard text to be used in environmental history courses. With global climate change, globalization and a globally uncontrolled economic growth policy on the rise, one would wish we would breed more Chico Mendes types (e.g., in China, India, Russia and OECD countries), to halt and reverse the ongoing global habitat destruction folly.

FALK HUETTMMANN

EWHALE laboratory, Institute of Arctic Biology, Biology & Wildlife Department, University of Alaska-Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska 99775 USA

understood without the accompanying text. This is indeed the case, and I enjoyed flipping through the book simply to look at the photographs.

In the preface, the authors state their two core principles were "Teaching comes First" and "Less is More". They have succeeded in sticking to their principles, without watering down the product. I was initially put off by the colourful page layout, as I assumed it meant that substance had been sacrificed for presentation. Happily, this was not the case. They manage to cover the core issues in each chapter with enough detail and illustrative examples to convey the message, but without overwhelming the reader with information. Each chapter is about 30 pages, and easily digested in a single sitting. They conclude each chapter with a list of suggested readings, which includes a good mix of classic texts, recent reviews, and key papers from the primary literature. This should satisfy motivated students, or provide material for class assignments.

Additional material is provided on a website devoted to the book, most of which is publicly accessible. Most notably, this includes additional empirical examples with questions suitable for use in a lab.

I would be quite happy to use this book as a textbook for a first or second year course in ecology. It doesn't provide enough depth for an upper year ecology course, however. The mathematical content is generally quite low. While this makes for a less intimidating introduction to ecology, I wonder if we do our students a disservice by shielding them from the complexity of ecological theory until after they've already forgotten their calculus. The publisher offers this textbook bundled together with Gotelli's *A Primer of Ecology*, which is more mathematically oriented, and additional theoretical detail is provided on the website. At \$130, this book is likely out of the price range of most amateur naturalists. However, birders or botanists interested in the science of ecology would certainly find this an accessible introduction to the topic, as would non-biology students.

TYLER SMITH

8 Hillcrest Avenue, Wolfville, Nova Scotia B4P 2R6 Canada