Book Review

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M. Waller (ed.)

Ethnoprimateology: Primate Conservation in the 21st Century

Springer, Cham 2016

Hardcover GBP 126.50; E-book GBP 101.00

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Ethnoprimateology is the study of human and non-human primate interactions, and these are characterised by complex, dynamic relationships. Michel Waller's edited volume brings together contributions from many of the scholars currently working in this field. The conservation theme runs throughout the 21 chapters, and examples of the highly diverse topics include: indigenous people and primates, bushmeat hunting, community conservation, primate rehabilitation, zoo visitor-primate interactions, stable isotope analysis and implications for conservation, commensal macaques, primate taxonomy, and the role of primates in religious and traditional medicine. The strength of the book lies in its wide diversity of case studies and data, most of which I found both useful and interesting.

Most contributions are well referenced and clearly written, making them accessible to readers lacking expertise in every subject included in the volume. The book facilitates cross-fertilisation among the many disciplines necessary to gain any kind of understanding of human-primate relations, and it illustrates the complexity and diversity of the ways human-primate interactions may be studied.

I was very disappointed at the lack of primate range country contributors. Abstracts would have made the volume more user friendly, and editing could have been better, quite a few typos have gone unnoticed. The book is not divided into sections, perhaps to convey the difficulty of compartmentalising ethnoprimateology, but the random placing of the chapters, despite some having a common theme, might spoil some readers' enjoyment of the book. There is a very short introduction but no final summary of the book, which might also disappoint.

Studies of human-primate interactions are increasing, so the book will be very useful for undergraduates, postgraduate students, conservation practitioners, and those with an interest in human-animal interactions in general. The somewhat prohibitive cost of the book and the e-book means that it may not be easily accessible to individuals, and I would recommend the purchase of the hardback by university and zoo libraries. The high price is unfortunate as it is essential reading for conservationists dealing with the human dimension – providing a guide to the multifaceted, highly complex issues of working with people and other primates as well as providing real inspiration for future work. This work is all the more urgent given the precarious state of many of the world's primates due to the diverse anthropogenic threats coming from an ever expanding human population. If that's what interests you, then do buy it – if you can afford it!

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