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**A review of: "Estuarine Ecology with particular reference to southern Africa. J. Day, Editor. 411 pp. Balkema: Rotterdam. 1981. £25.00, Hfl. 112.50, U.S. \$49.50. ISBN 90 6191 205 9"**

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## Book Reviews

*Estuarine Ecology with particular reference to southern Africa*. J. Day, Editor. 411 pp. Balkema: Rotterdam. 1981. £25.00, Hfl. 112.50, U.S. \$49.50. ISBN 90 6191 205 9

This book of 17 chapters is written by 10 authors other than Professor Day who both made a major contribution to the text and edited the whole. The first five chapters are first concerned with the nature, classification and origin of estuaries, followed by a consideration of the chemical and physical factors operative. Chapters 6 to 13 treat the biota inhabiting southern African estuaries and its adaptations to this environment. Current knowledge relating to 43 of these estuaries is summarised in Chapter 14. The coastal lakes of south and south-eastern Africa receive a separate treatment, both physico-chemical and biological in Chapter 15. Environmental constraints, including pollution, are treated in Chapter 16, and the last chapter is concerned with the management of estuaries.

This book will undoubtedly whet the appetite of estuarine biologists for a closer acquaintance with those of southern Africa, not least because of the sometimes obscure, but not less tantalising glimpses offered. Thus the photographs, though generally poor, e.g. the mangrove pp. 86, 87, and of little use to the serious reader do make one wish for a clear view of what must be a most interesting subject. One is left with the same feeling with almost all of the line drawings, which contain a lot of useful information, but the poor presentation (contrasting oddly with that in Professor Day's paper in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa*, 33) fails to do justice to the material presented. This perhaps is symptomatic of the book as a whole for an index which refers only to chapter and not to page, but yet contains hundreds of species and places, is a hindrance rather than an aid. Similarly, to treat some aspect of the environment in essentially vague and unreferenced terms as was Permeability and the Depth of the Water Table pp. 53–54, for example, is unhelpful and likely to discourage many a reader.

The chapter, 17, concerned with management of the estuarine environment was interesting, particularly in the efforts to compare practice in the U.S., Australia and Britain with southern Africa. Since, however, the practice developing in the E.E.C. is likely to affect not only member states, but

the world at large, it is unfortunate that the European experience was confined to an incomplete account of British practice.

If I seem to be unduly critical of this work, it should be said that having known of its preparation, and of the work of Professor Day, I had looked forward eagerly to its appearance. In the event, I must admit to disappointment, but hope that with the next edition the problems indicated will have been rectified. In the meanwhile, however, I, and I am sure many other workers, will use *Estuarine Ecology* as an invaluable source book.

E. J. PERKINS