

dotal presentation of facts irritating—I feel certain the Authors could have made an effort to reveal their sources. Other contributions have strangely meaningless titles—“Technical Overview” (of what?), “A Regional Strategy” (of where?) and “Scheme Worthwhileness” (of what, when and where?) which is not only silly, but actually obscures some rather interesting material, particularly in the case of the last-mentioned.

Yet, in and out there are some good things. For all students of the British coast, Bell's contribution on 'A county council's approach' is down to earth, and actually reveals many of the frustrations and pressures that understaffed and underfunded local authorities find themselves in when faced with unstoppable coastal developments. This chapter, incidentally, includes the seminal photograph (Fig. 2) of unaesthetic coastal defences. There are two excellent papers. One, by Penning-Rowse *et al.*, on the 'value' of the coast, both in basic economic terms and by adding values to visitors. The other important paper is that dealing with the history of sea defenses at Bournemouth by Lelliot, who has provided a case study itemizing some 30 odd attempts to stabilize one piece of shore. However, the Author might have provided a more critical commentary, at one point "D Jones Esq" is chastised for producing an inconvenient storm that destroyed some experiments with artificial seawalls! There is virtually no explanation as to why one site could have constantly needed new sea defenses, but nonetheless it is a good example of what seawalls and groynes can do, given the opportunity (I wish I could share the Author's optimism!).

Many of the papers are brief resumes of complex topics; climatic change, wave hydraulics and so forth are all dealt with superficially. Many of the references are to virtually unobtainable Reports.

Sitting back to reflect, I must question whether or not this sort of book is really worthwhile. I would guess that a lot of the meaning has been lost in translation from the lecture hall to the page. It is very easy to talk about well-known examples to a local audience, yet when these are presented to a wider audience they seem to lack vitality and interest (especially if they are not placed in context). The overall impression of this book is that coastal management in Britain is struggling to find an

identity, somewhere between the unacceptable pouring of concrete and the unprofitable advocacy of the 'do-nothing' school of thought. The repeated failure of many schemes must be a matter of concern, and it is difficult to find much cause for hope in this volume. It may be that the organizational framework is at fault, but this is never really questioned explicitly, beyond the universal call for better cooperation between scientists and engineers and more 'consistency' in approach.

Finally, while I was reading the book an intriguing story appeared in *The Guardian* (a national daily paper). It seems that Kevin, a self-styled wizard has been selling spells to halt shoreline erosion at £200 a time to communities on the south coast of England. Kevin has a lot going for him; he's cheap, he's environment friendly, and above all he seems to have as much chance of success as many of the solutions put forward in this, and other, books. Perhaps we need a new marketing strategy, designed by a wizard.

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Sea of Cortez Marine Invertebrates: a Guide for the Pacific Coast, Mexico to Ecuador, Alex Kerstitch, 1989, Sea Challengers, 4 Somerset Rise, Monterey, CA 114p. US\$21.50 (+ \$2.35 postage). ISBN 0-930118-14-6 (soft-cover).

This book is written in the form of a pictorial field guide with the interested amateur naturalist (fisherman, diver, beachcomber) in mind. The major goal of the book is to acquaint people with the conspicuous invertebrates of the Sea of Cortez and aspects of their biology in order to encourage recognition of the uniqueness of the region and its conservation.

The book begins with brief summaries of the principal characteristics of the invertebrate phyla, followed by a pictorial key to the phyla. I like the idea of putting the fairly substantial glossary at this point, where a non-expert can be readily introduced to the terminology, rather than its being hidden at the end of the book.

The body of the book consists of excellent full color photographs side-by-side with descriptions for the species illustrated; 283 species rep-

representing 16 classes. Three classes, the Gastropoda, Cusacea and Anthozoa, comprise 71% of the total species illustrated. Most of the species are large (less than 2cm) and occur on hard substrata. The depth range covered stretches from the low intertidal to greater than 100m depth, with most of the species occurring at depths less than 10m. The paragraph long descriptions include both the species' scientific and common names, a brief description of the species, its habitat preferences and distribution, and comments on interesting aspects of the species biology, such as feeding biology, commensal and parasitic relationships, and conservation status.

For a person unfamiliar with the area, the inclusion of a map of the region, indicating the

major locations mentioned in the text would add greatly to usefulness of the book. While not providing illustrations of all the species present in the region, the book makes it possible for the interested amateur naturalist to easily identify many of the larger, more observable invertebrates and to obtain some information on their biology. For those whose interests exceed the scope of the book, the author includes a list of references to more specialized works.

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