

Nudibranchs of Southern Africa: a guide to opisthobranch molluscs of southern Africa by Terrence Gosliner, 1987. Sea Challengers, Monterey, and Jeff Hamann, El Cajon, 136p. Paper, \$34.95, ISBN 0-930118-13-8.

Southern Africa, whose east coast originates in tropical waters and whose west coast is cooled by upwelling and the north-flowing Benguela current, may be expected to have a rich and complex benthic marine fauna. This expectation though does not adequately prepare one for the diversity of species, color, and form encountered in Terrence Gosliner's guide to the opisthobranch molluscs of southern Africa. This book—the first comprehensive guide to the sea-slugs of the region—is a visual feast. Two hundred and sixty eight species are represented, each with a stunning color photograph from life as well as thoroughly researched summaries of taxonomy, natural history, and distribution. Using simple morphology and color to distinguish the species, this guide is intended for anyone interested in identifying members of this visually flamboyant group of animals. However, the authoritative text, broad distribution of many of the species, and diversity of families and genera will especially interest students of the opisthobranchia, professional malacologists, and marine biologists.

Of the three parts, the well-written introduction provides a concise account of the evolution, biology, and systematics of opisthobranch molluscs, advice on finding and observing these often cryptic animals, and a particularly interesting discussion of the biogeography of the species from southern Africa. The last, however, would have profited from the juxtaposition of a map of the major collecting localities and other regions mentioned in the text. The bar graphs (labelled as Table 2) illustrating the geographic transition of a primarily Indo-Pacific and circumtropical fauna to one dominated by Atlantic and endemic species are useful, but should have included the number of species in each faunal component along with the percentages—how much of this wonderful diversity is circumtropical, endemic, etc., and how many species have been found in a particular locality?

The second part of the book includes a list of all species of opisthobranchs reported from southern Africa (not just those pictured in the

book) and some aids for identification: a glossary of morphological terms, line drawings of representative animals and significant morphological features (additional labelling would make some of these more useful), and a key to the species described in the guide. The key relies on external morphology and color of living animals, but, as modestly implied in the text, the original identifications were based on Dr. Gosliner's extensive anatomical studies, familiarity with the world literature, and research throughout the world.

The color plates and species descriptions comprise the third and major part. The plates are exquisitely printed (no doubt explaining much of this book's cost), the layout is clear, and the text is again lucid, informative, and free of obvious errors. For each animal the author points out taxonomically important characteristics (specialists will appreciate the inclusion of traits used to distinguish genera), summarizes knowledge of natural history and distribution, and, if applicable, provides a synonymy (the sizes of the animals pictured are unfortunately not given until the last page of the book). While much work remains to be done on this fauna—approximately 100 of the species illustrated are formally undescribed or of uncertain taxonomic status, and little is known about the biology and distribution of many—Gosliner has expanded our knowledge of these animals immensely with this solid and well researched book. From both aesthetic and scientific points of view *Nudibranchs of Southern Africa* is one of the best general guides yet produced for this exquisite group of animals.

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The Geomorphology of Rock Coasts, A.S. Trenhaile 1987, Clarendon Press, Oxford, no price given (Hardcover) 384 pp., ISBN 0-19-823279-9.

This book, another in the "Oxford Research Studies in Geography," deals with rock coasts as interpreted in a geomorphological sense. Although there is a great literature on rock coasts, this book is especially welcome because