

THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION: BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN SPACE AND TIME. *Second Edition.*

By Jacques Blondel, James Aronson, Jean-Yves Bodiou, and Gilles Boeuf, with assistance of Christelle Fontaine. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. \$125.00 (hardcover); \$65.00 (paper). xv + 376 p. + 10 pl.; ill.; index. ISBN: 978-0-19-955798-1 (pb); 978-0-19-955799-8 (pb). 2010.

At the crossroad of three continents, and inhabited by a bewildering diversity of nations with contrasting historical roots and cultural backgrounds, the Mediterranean region is also characterized by the astounding diversity of their biological systems, both terrestrial and marine. This broad region, which extends across nearly 5000 km in an east-west direction, is one of the most remarkable biodiversity hotspots on Earth. Its flora consists of about 10% of all known plant species, occurring in an area that is only about 1.5% of emerged lands. The Mediterranean Sea harbors 5.6% of the world's marine animal taxa, and 16.9% of the marine flora, in an area equaling only 0.8% of the world's oceanic surface. But this extraordinary species richness is not the only aspect that renders the Mediterranean region biologically remarkable. Diversity also comes in the form of a myriad marine and terrestrial habitat types, as well as in the form of disparate biogeographical affinities, ecological features, and geological age of the organisms involved. A comprehensive and accessible description of all these facets of biological diversity, its spatial and temporal variation, and conservation prospects in the unique sociological context of the Mediterranean region, is what readers will find in this outstanding book.

Blondel and Aronson have improved greatly on the first edition of this work, published in 1999. By adding Bodiou and Boeuf as coauthors for two new chapters on the sea itself, both the scope and usefulness of the volume have been considerably broadened. In addition, the entire text has been significantly revised and updated to incorporate recent findings, as denoted by the addition of more than 400 new references dated after 2000. Some geographical and taxonomic biases that were apparent in the earlier edition have been mitigated, although not completely eliminated. Acknowledged by the authors as the consequence of their particular fields of specialization, some of these biases (e.g., the underrepresentation of invertebrates relative to vertebrates; the limited treatment of patterns of diversity in arid environments) could limit the reliability of certain generalizations or even conceal some patterns. This minor weakness notwithstanding, this volume should be sought by professional ecologists, committed students, and well-educated visitors coming

to the region. They will get a manageable, well-written, and easily read volume that provides a rigorous overview of the biological riches that, rather unexpectedly given the millenarian history of human settlement, transformation, and exploitation, can still be found around in the Mediterranean region all the way from sea depths to the highest mountain tops.

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TWENTIETH-CENTURY NEW ENGLAND LAND CONSERVATION: A HERITAGE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

Edited by Charles H. W. Foster. Petersham (Massachusetts): Harvard Forest; distributed by Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Massachusetts). \$24.95. xvii + 388 p.; ill.; no index. ISBN: 978-0-674-03289-7. 2009.

This volume is a worthwhile read for anyone interested in the evolution and accomplishments of protection efforts in New England over the last century. The book's motivation grew from a 2005 meeting of prominent conservationists assembled to review conservation gains in the region—both for the historical record and to serve as a reference for future conservationists.

The volume begins with an overview of the social and ecological characteristics of New England—factors that largely bound the range of conservation opportunities in the region. Next is a series of state-specific chapters (i.e., Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut), each written by key conservation leaders who were oftentimes at the center of land conservation issues within each state. Another chapter describes the federal government's role in resource protection—an important function often overlooked in this region where "home rule" and private ownership prevail. Indeed, New England's dominance of private ownership (75% region wide) places vast areas open to strong development pressures, especially along scenic shorelines and mountain tops. Protecting the public interest within this complex social, economic, and ecological setting requires creative thinking, flexibility, and endurance. Here, the authors describe the rise of the region's land trust movement; the growing cooperation between various levels of government and the creation of local, state, and federally protected areas; and the growing use of market-based incentives such as conservation easements.

Taken together, *Twentieth-Century New England Land Conservation* is a timely compilation of emerging issues, conservation setbacks, and the considerable successes encountered during efforts to bridge the gap between private lands and public