

REVIEWS

FOREST ISLAND DYNAMICS IN MAN-DOMINATED LANDSCAPES (Ecological Studies Vol. 41), edited by R. L. Burgess and D. M. Sharpe. Springer-Verlag, New York, 310 pp.

I undertook to review this book because I hoped to learn some general principles about the dynamics of forest islands in man-dominated landscapes. Instead I found a collection of papers which are mostly specific studies of forest remnants of a few hectares or less, in the eastern deciduous forest zone of the U.S.A. The fact that these papers have a theme in common warrants their being placed together in a special edition of an ecological journal, but to publish them in book form seems somewhat grandiose in view of their content.

One thing the papers do have in common is a readiness to cite other authors (a reference list of about 500) even for the most obvious statements—*e.g.*, “Solar radiation is controlled by the aspect of the [forest] edge (3 refs.) and by latitude (ref)”. Another thing they have in common is to state the obvious in unnecessary jargon—*e.g.*, “Once established, [forest] edges themselves act as a source of propagules for edge-oriented species and invade adjacent forest interiors far in excess of interisland dispersal levels for the same species (i.e. interisland propagule dispersal becomes less important while intraisland propagule exchange becomes more important).” Quite frankly, I found most of the papers tedious and not at all enlightening, but there were two exceptions.

The first is a short paper by A. L. Sullivan entitled “Artificial Succession—A Feeding Strategy for the Megazoo”. In this he states that “Ecologists normally have a great affection for systems in which man is not dominant, especially ones that they helped preserve [while] lawmakers and policy planners often have great affection for the social systems they have helped build.” He then expands on the theme that much of nature is man-dominated and is as worthy of ecological study as those areas where man has had relatively little influence.

The second is another short paper, “The Minimum Critical Size of Ecosystems” by T. E. Lovejoy and D. C. Oren. This I found to be full of good sense. For instance, “The focus on number of species [tends] to obscure . . . the very fundamental

point that it is important to save functioning ecosystems and their processes, not just collections of species . . . The great trap in all of this is to treat all species as being equal, which the simplicity of island biogeographic models tends to encourage." The essence of his paper is that playing a numbers game is irrelevant to determining the minimum requirements for maintaining viable populations of individual species.

In New Zealand, the Forest Service's Indigenous Forest Policy ensures that the ecological areas being established in State forests will not become "islands" in a matrix of exotic forest or farmland, and this, together with their representativeness and large individual sizes, ensures that the numbers game is well taken care of. What is not known at this stage is what is required to prevent potentially endangered species such as the kaka and kokako from achieving the status of the takahe, the kakapo and the black robin. Scientific effort in this direction has a greater potential to produce answers on which sensible decisions regarding preservation can be based.

D. A. Franklin

FIELD GUIDE TO FUNGI, by Greta Stevenson, Published by Canterbury University Press, \$4.95.

This compact little book of 122 well-filled pages explains well the importance of its subject especially to foresters. The first sections set out clearly what the larger fungi do in the field, how they are classified, and how they may be collected and recorded, with full details of how to give a permanent scientific account of any specimen. The later sections define the main classes of larger fungi and give some details of families and common genera and species. For the Agaricales which include the most numerous, conspicuous, and important fungi of our forests, both indigenous and exotic, keys for the identification of genera are given as well as descriptions of common species. The gasteromycetes get a thoroughly modern treatment. The work generally is clear and concise and is supported by accurate line drawings. Bibliography, glossary and index are detailed.

The book has been very carefully prepared and should provide a much needed stimulus for this woefully neglected subject. In New Zealand hundreds of botanists devote their lives to higher