Coral Reef Fishes: Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean including the Red Sea. Ewald Lieske and Roberts Myers. Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton New Jersey 08540, USA. 1996. 400 pp.

Coral reefs are massive structures built by Scleractinids, all of which have limestone skeletons. Reef-building requires ample sunlight, warm temperatures, high salinity (> 20 ppt), relatively sediment-free water, and a stable hard bottom for attachment. Coral reefs are best developed in shallow tropical seas and include also areas adjacent to reefs, where corals may occur, such as harbours, bays, and rocky tidepools as well as reef-associated habitats such as seagrass beds, sandy expanses, and open rocky bottoms. More than 4,000 species of fishes are known to inhabit coral reefs. This book is a comprehensive, handy guide to quickly identify 2,074 species and includes over 2,500 colour illustrations, some of which also depict male, female, juvenile or geographical varieties of the species. It is authored by experts in diving and underwater photography, and may help to quickly identify 1,700 coral fishes in the Indo-Pacific region and 350 western Atlantic species. The terminal scientific index may prove useful in quickening the identification process.

Explosive growth of the marine aquarium hobby and scuba diving certainly emphasizes the need for conservation of these rare coral resources. Scuba diving is one of the world's fastest growing sport; millions of Americans, Europeans and Japanese are certified divers. Most of them visit their favourite coral reef year after year. In the Caribbean and Maldives, the economic prosperity of entire nations depends on their underwater parks and the tourists they attract. Therefore, the book will be of great importance to marine aquarium keepers, scuba divers and countries interested in attracting tourists to marine parks.

The text commences with the useful introduction to evolution and zoogeography, ecology, sociology and special behaviour of coral fishes; it also provides a glimpse over dangerous marine fishes and suggests the need for conservation of coral reef fishes. Following the brief introduction, each of the 175 sections describes a dozen closely-related species; for each species, the description commences with the common name followed by the zoological name; morphological characters, which may help to instantaneously identify the species. This is followed by brief notes on its ecology and geographical range of distribution. For each species, size is given in length and for some like the groupers, which grow to over 300 kg, weight is also given. The authors must be congratulated for giving a specific common name for each species. This can be appreciated from the following example. The family Pomacentridae includes a large number of species commonly known as damselfishes; identification key is provided for 231 damselfishes including 83 damsels, 43 chromies, 30 domoiselles, 28 anemonefishes, 13 gregories, 12 sergeants and 2 scalyfins and 2 devils; the authors have found the easily recognizable common names for all the 231 damselfishes.

For a few species like Bleekers demoiselle and Black demoiselle, the corresponding figures are not given. There are some mistakes; for example page 162 'aquariums'. Since the book is also to be used by laymen, a couple of figures to illustrate fringing reef, barrier reef and atoll could have been more useful. Likewise, a few photos of different corals could also have been more helpful. Still, the authors may be appreciated for an excellent job and the handy book will be very useful for all those interested in corals and reef fishes.

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MEETINGS/SYMPOSIA/SEMINARS

National Seminar on Pharmaceutical Biotechnology: Current Status and Future Prospects

Date: 31 January and 1 February 1998
Place: Ahmedabad

This seminar will be held at the B.V. Patel Pharmaceutical Education and Research Development (PERD) Centre, Ahmedabad.

Contact: Convener
National Seminar
c/o B.V. Patel PERD Centre
Thaltej–Gandhinagar Highway, Thaltej
Ahmedabad 380 054
Fax: 079-7450449
Tel: 079-490375

Workshop on Himalayan Foreland Basin with special reference to Pre-Siwalik Tertiaries

Date: 16–19 March 1998
Place: Jammu

The aim of this workshop, being organized by the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun, is to provide a forum to disseminate the state-of-art knowledge on Himalayan Foreland Basin as a whole with highlights on the Late Eocene–Early Miocene interval.

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