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Author

Eichhorn, Markus P

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Peer reviewed

books noted with interest

Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia

Harold G Cogger

2014, CSIRO Publishing, 1064 pp., 7th edition

AU\$150 (Hardback)

ISBN 9780643100350

www.publish.csiro.au

Sometimes the best books take a lifetime to develop. Much expanded since the first edition of 1975, this definitive guide now documents over 1200 species of frogs, crocodiles, turtles, tortoises, lizards and snakes. Guides to diagnostic features and dichotomous keys aid in field identification, combined with photographs for most taxa. Species-level distribution maps and notes on natural history provide a wealth of data, along with an excellent bibliography and glossary. Of particular merit is the summary table which synthesises all currently recognised species and their distribution by state and bioregion. It deserves a place on the bookshelf of any Antipodean biogeographer.

Functional and Phylogenetic Ecology in R

Nathan G Swenson

2014, Springer, 212 pp.

£29.99 (Paperback)

ISBN 9781461495420

www.springer.com

Are you interested in the assembly of ecological communities? If you're not thinking about the phylogenetic relationships among species or their functional traits, you're missing out on critical information—just knowing names and abundances is insufficient. This book is based on a course taught by the author and has therefore gone through rigorous user testing, which shows in the clear layout and detailed step-by-step guidance through sophisticated statistical analyses. It includes up-to-date coverage of hot topics such as phylogenetic and functional beta diversity and the tricky issue of appropriate null models. Anyone embarking on related research will benefit from this.

Community Ecology: Analytical Methods Using R and Excel

Mark Gardener

2014, Pelagic Publishing, 556 pp.

£59.99 (Hardback) / £39.99 (Paperback)

ISBN 9781907807626 / 9781907807619

www.pelagicpublishing.com

Following an intuitive thread from data entry through to analysis and interpretation, this is intended as a comprehensive course in the main methods of community analysis, both traditional and current. The intimidating length can largely be attributed to the numerous worked examples with full output. Some techniques are demonstrated in both Excel and R, which seems superfluous, since the latter is almost invariably superior. I would have liked more on GREP, an invaluable tool for checking and formatting data, and a notable weakness of Excel. Overall this is a useful resource for postgraduate students, but it could have been more concise and selective.

Markus Eichhorn

University of Nottingham, UK

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