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## The Economics of Conserving Wildlife and Natural Areas, by Clem Tisdell

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ourselves. The books reviewed here—particularly those by Langston, Bass, and Schneider and Root—can help us think more clearly.

## REVIEWS

*The Economics of Conserving Wildlife and Natural Areas.* By Clem Tisdell. Cheltenham, UK/Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2002. Pp. 308. \$90.00 hardcover.

Few researchers match the energy of Clem Tisdell in writing on conservation and other ecological economics topics. The author notes in the Preface that as well as the 24 chapters in this book, his publications on conservation, management, and use of nature can also be found in eight other books he has authored! His prolific output over the past 30 years is best known in his native Australia, where much, but far from all, of his research is focused. The insights in the chapters are of relevance in many countries where conservation of wildlife and management of natural areas are important issues.

*The Economics of Conserving Wildlife and Natural Areas* is a compilation of essays of which 21 have been previously published in peer-reviewed journals. The book comprises four parts. In part I the author provides an overview of the contents of the book noting that in general the chapters are arranged so that the reader moves from general to more specific topics. Part II contains six chapters and is entitled "General Issues in Biological Conservation." These chapters were first published between 1985 and 1996. Part III contains ten chapters and is entitled "Economics of Conserving Wildlife Species." Five of the essays were first published during the 1970s and the most recent chapter was written in 2001. Part IV contains seven chapters and is entitled "Conservation and Use of Natural Areas." The earliest essay was first published in 1972 and chapter 24 was written in 2001.

The publishers have reproduced the previously published essays in their original formats and fonts. Chapters 2 and 7 are printed in 8-point font, with two columns per page. They are not easily read. All other chapters are in single column format and have larger, but varying fonts, layout, and referencing systems. These features detract from the value of the book and the impression created is that the publishers have avoided the cost of preparing each of the chapters in a consistent format and font by the simple expedient of reproduction of the original journal articles.

What of the content of the chapters? One way to describe the chapters is to group them under three headings: theoretical analysis and discussion of conservation topics (chapters 2, 3, 6, 7 are examples), analysis including illustrative diagrams but without empirical data

(chapters 4, 8, 12, 19 are examples), and chapters that include a significant components of new empirical research (chapters 16, 17, 22, 24 are examples).

Through careful use of a range of economic concepts and thoughtful logical argument, Tisdell is able to scrutinize conservation literature and highlight the deficiencies that occur when conservationists overlook economic principles. In a similar vein he illustrates how microeconomics can be employed to critique conservation policy and suggest possible improvements to land use policies and species management policies. The insights gained from these predominantly verbal analyses are always good sense and provide excellent examples of the power of basic economics in dissecting conservation topics.

Diagrammatic illustrations are accompanied in some chapters by some mathematical formalism to analyze selected conservation issues. These modes of analysis appear to provide more rigorous study of topics than occurs when solely verbal analysis is employed, but the principal advantage of diagrams and "marginal rules" may be their ability to evoke nods of support from readers. Diagrammatic analysis is often persuasive, but without empirical research to verify the shape and slope of functions or document the magnitudes of scales on the axes, readers are unable to gauge how certain are the relationships or the conclusions drawn from analysis of the issues.

Articles providing new empirical results are always welcome and the chapters co-authored with other researchers reporting on minke whale, dugongs, deforestation, Asian elephants, and kangaroos are among the most informative and interesting in this book. The data reported in these chapters is used to illustrate or buttress arguments. None of the chapters include complex statistical or econometric analyses.

It is rare for a book to contain 24 chapters and this book provides a surprisingly large amount of reading. The range of topics covered is likely to be sufficient to provide interest and value to many readers. Professors searching for articles that illustrate to third- or fourth-year students the relevance of microeconomics to analysis of conservation topics will find plenty to choose from in the book. Able students will recognise both the strengths and limitations of the analyses in the chapters and perceive there is scope to revisit several of the issues with more sophisticated techniques and data potentially to derive sharper insights. Conservation policy analysts will find encouraging examples of logical analysis allied with concern for both nature and commerce.

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