
Noteworthy Books

Received by the *Southeastern Naturalist*, Issue 19/3, 2020

Alligators: The Illustrated Guide to Their Biology, Behavior, and Conservation. Kent A. Vliet. 2020. John Hopkins University Press. Baltimore, MD. 304 pp. \$49.95, hardcover. ISBN 9781421433370. Iconic predators, American Alligators can grow to 13 feet or more and live as long as humans. They are complex creatures, capable of terrific attacks and yet tending to their young in the same gentle way a mother duck looks after her brood. Alligators came close to extinction in the 20th century, but thanks to conservation efforts have since made a comeback. In this fascinating, richly illustrated account, expert zoologist Kent A. Vliet introduces readers to the biology, ecology, and natural history of the American Alligator. With nuanced depictions of their hidden lives, this book will forever change the way you think of these giant reptiles.

Trees of Alabama. Lisa J. Samuelson. 2020. University of Alabama Press. Tuscaloosa, AL. 384 pp. \$34.95, softcover. ISBN 9780817359416. Alabama is blessed with a staggering diversity of tree species. Lisa J. Samuelson provides a user-friendly identification guide featuring straightforward descriptions and vivid photographs of more than 140 common species of trees. With more than 800 full-color photographs illustrating the general form and habitat of each, plus the distinguishing characteristics of its buds, leaves, flowers, fruit, and bark, readers will be able to identify trees quickly. Colored distribution maps detail the range and occurrence of each species grouped by county, and a quick guide highlights key features at a glance. The book also features a map of forest types, chapters on basic tree biology and terminology, a spotlight on the plethora of oak species in the state, and a comprehensive index. This is an invaluable resource for biologists, foresters, and educators and a great reference for outdoorspeople and nature enthusiasts in Alabama and throughout the southeastern United States.

Desert Navigator: The Journey of an Ant. Rudiger Wehner. 2020. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, MA. 400 pp. \$59.95, hardcover.

ISBN: 9780674045880. *Cataglyphis* desert ants are agile ultra-runners who can tolerate the near-lethal temperatures of the midday sun. But it is their remarkable navigational abilities that make these ants so fascinating to study. *Cataglyphis* navigators can set out foraging across vast expanses of desert terrain in search of prey, and then find the shortest way home. Through a lively and lucid narrative, *Desert Navigator* offers a firsthand look the extraordinary skills of these charismatic desert dwellers. Wehner and his team discovered that these insect navigators use visual cues in the sky that humans are unable to see, the Earth's magnetic field, wind direction, a step counter, and panoramic "snapshots" of landmarks, among other resources. At any given time during their long journey, they know exactly where to go. It is no wonder these nimble and versatile creatures have become models in the study of animal navigation.

Primer of Ecological Restoration. Karen D. Hull. 2020. Island Press. Washington, DC. 224 pp. \$35.00, softcover. ISBN 9781610919722. The pace, intensity, and scale at which humans have altered our planet in recent decades is unprecedented. We have dramatically transformed landscapes and waterways through agriculture, logging, mining, and fire suppression, with drastic impacts on public health and human well-being. What can we do to counteract and even reverse the worst of these effects? The *Primer of Ecological Restoration* is a succinct introduction to the theory and practice of ecological restoration as a strategy to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems. In 12 brief chapters, the book introduces readers to the basics of restoration project planning, monitoring, and adaptive management. Perfect for introductory classes in ecological restoration or for practitioners seeking constructive guidance for real-world projects, *Primer of Ecological Restoration* offers accessible, practical information on recent trends in the field.

The *Southeastern Naturalist* welcomes submissions of review copies of books that publishers or authors would like to recommend to the journal's readership and are relevant to the journal's mission of publishing information about the natural history of the southeastern US. Accompanying short, descriptive summaries of the text are also welcome.