

# Ecology Review Lauds Scientific Monographs

Words of praise for the National Park Service's Scientific Monograph Series appeared in *Ecology* (Vol. 63, No. 2, p. 601-2) from the pen of Norman L. Christensen, department of botany, Duke University. Some excerpts:

"Several volumes deal with the ecology of large mammals and the importance of National Parks as refuges for such beasts. The first volume on the bison in Yellowstone National Park (by M. Meagher) is a data-rich treatment of the factors controlling their populations. It also provides a detailed description of the historical changes in bison populations in Yellowstone. The biology of the grizzly bear in Mount McKinley National Park is the topic of the fourteenth number in the series. This volume represents the life work of Adolph Murie and deals primarily with the habits and behavior of the grizzlies. Written almost in the style of a diary, it is a beautiful glimpse into the wonderings and wanderings of a superb naturalist. Unlike other volumes, we are not confronted here (for better or worse) with tables or statistics. To quote Murie, 'I have, I think, avoided the ecologists jargon, the scientific phrases so frequently created by ecologists and animal behaviorists to make simple facts sound profound and impressive.' Nonetheless, we are convinced by this volume that careful empirical observations, even if expressed in the common tongue, still are of great value in ecology.

"Numbers 8 and 12 (*Ecology of the Saguaro* by W. F. Steenbergh and C.H. Lowe and *Giant Sequoia Ecology* by H.T. Harvey, H.S. Shellhammer and R.E. Stecker) are detailed and comprehensive accounts of the ecology of single species. . . . The basic ecological information provided more than justifies their existence. However, I found the final chapters in each volume on management problems and strategies to be equally informative. Both volumes provide ample proof of the essential connections between ecological studies and sound management policy.

"... Four volumes together form one of the most comprehensive treatments I know of on the ecology of Atlantic Coast barrier islands. Number 7 (by H. Art) is an ecosystem-level study of the sunken forest on the Fire Island National Seashore. Numbers 6 (by S. Au) and 9 (by P. and M. Godfrey) deal with the history and dynamics of barrier island ecosystems south of Cape Hatteras. Number 3 (by A.S. Johnson, H.O. Hillstead, S.F. and G.F. Shanholtzer) is a survey of the variety of ecosystems associated with barrier islands along the coast of Georgia. This volume treats in greater detail than the other three the faunal ecology of these ecosystems, including invertebrates."

In summation of the series review, Christensen asks a question and then provides his own answer.

"Is the publication of such a monograph series justified in an age of competing needs and budget constraints? After reading these volumes, I answer with an emphatic yes. These are not 'coffee table' picture books and, in fact, may seem pretty dull reading to the average park visitor. However, each book gives a very factual look at interesting organisms and unique ecosystems, and makes clear the problems involved in integrating this information into policy decisions in the context of the multiple goals of the Park Service. For several years I have used two of the barrier island volumes as case history studies in my plant ecology course. Because they are less austere than scientific papers, students find them interesting to read, yet each one explicitly outlines methods, results, and conclusions in a very scientific style. Their modest cost makes them attractive for this purpose. It would be a great loss if the National Parks were not major laboratories for ecological research. These volumes represent an appropriate vehicle for synthesis of that research and deserve much more attention than they have yet received.