

Thailand's Vanishing Flora and Fauna, by Mark Graham and Philip Round. Finance One Public Co. Ltd., Bangkok, 1994. 247 pp. Size: 8.5" x 12". Price 1,450 baht or US\$58.00.

This book was written by two native Britons who have traveled widely in Thailand. The first author has lived in Thailand for 26 years and is an amateur naturalist and photographer. The second author is an ornithologist and field biologist who has lived in Thailand for more than a decade. Living in Thailand for such a long time has made them feel that few Thai people, especially Bangkokians, are aware of the wealth of nature Thailand has. This book, by presenting so much of Thailand's natural beauty, should help Thai people appreciate nature more so that they will get involved in protecting Thailand's wild plants and animals in one way or another.

The ample size of the book puts it in the coffee-table category. It is well equipped with plenty of excellent colorful pictures, most of which were taken by Mark Graham. One may want to browse just from one picture to the other and read just the captions. A picture of a Green Water Dragon appears on the front cover while a picture of a Crested Serpent Eagle appears on the back. Representative scenery of different parts of Thailand and the locations of important nature reserves are presented in the first section. Pictures of plant life constitute the following section, including tropical rainforest, mangrove forest and some representative types of plants and fungi. Then pictures of varieties of insects are presented. The role of insects as pollinators is emphasized. Pictures of mammals, amphibians and reptiles, birds, and ocean life constitute further sections. I believe that the authors could have included more pictures of the natural habitats of wildlife in the first chapter, and on conservation issues in the final one. Concerned readers may get lost and start to ask questions about what role they can play to help maintain the natural beauty which they see throughout the book. Including more pictures on activities which promote conservation of wild plants and animals would have made the book serve a better role in conservation.

The very curious reader may, as I did, read the book from cover to cover. I found the text quite technical though not as technical as most scientific literature. I realize why it is that way; the book apparently was strongly influenced by the authors' scientist colleagues. A lot of readers may believe incorrectly, that there has been a lot of scientific research done on Thai plants and animals, which the authors made good use of. In fact, relatively little research has been done on wild plants and animals in Thailand. This book would have done us a greater service in pointing this out so that more support would be generated for scientific research. It is true, as the authors stated on the back cover, that understanding and appreciating plants and animals is not just for scientists, but for all Thais. But to achieve better scientific information and understanding, it is essential that more support be given to scientific research, especially from sources within Thailand.

This book will undoubtedly serve some role in conservation of wild plants and animals in Thailand. But it could serve a better role, perhaps, if it had more carefully focussed on its intended audience. A book of this type, addressed to Thai people but written in English, should contain less text and more pictures. Also, suggestions might have been given on how the readers can observe the things that they can see in the book, or on how they can

support the conservation movement. The price of the book seems a bit high for many potential local readers.

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