

Hills and Streams: An Ecology of Hong Kong, by David Dudgeon and Richard Corlett. Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 1994. xv + 234 pp; 68 colour plates.

The territory of Hong Kong, incorporating Hong Kong Island, together with Kowloon and the New Territories, parts of the adjacent Chinese mainland, covers an area of 1076 sq. km. Notwithstanding its long history of human occupation, high level of human disturbance (hardly any forest remained when the island of Hong Kong was occupied by the British in the 1840s) and present high degree of urbanisation, Hong Kong still supports a rich and varied biota. This is covered in great detail in this attractively illustrated and engaging book. The nine chapters cover evolution and adaptation; environment and history; climate, seasonality, ecological succession, aquatic and riparian ecology, foods and feeding, exotic (introduced) species, and conservation. It would therefore serve very well as a general primer on basic ecological principles for Thai students.

As the authors make clear, notwithstanding the establishment of a network of upland country parks, major habitats (chiefly in the lowlands) are left unprotected. Furthermore, commercial development, including the new airport, new roads, golf courses, *etc.*, together with a renewed wave of rural migration into previously abandoned villages, is placing many high biodiversity sites at risk. Even though the territory's colonial administration is beginning, at long last, to respond to conservation issues, deep anxiety must hang over the territory's future when it is returned to China in 1997. A complementary volume, dealing with the ecology of Hong Kong's extremely rich and productive coastal zones, which include the internationally important wetlands of Mai Po Marshes and Deep Bay, would therefore be very timely.

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