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THE QUINTESSENTIAL NATURALIST:

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF OLIVER P. PEARSON

Douglas A. Kelt, Enrique P. Lessa, J. Salazar-Bravo, and James L. Patton (eds.) 2007. University of California Publications in Zoology 134. xii + 981 pp.

This impressive volume honors a giant in the field of Neotropical mammalogy. In the *festschrift* tradition used to celebrate other scientific leaders, editors Kelt, Lessa, Salazar-Bravo and Patton solicited contributions spanning the disciplines cultivated by Pearson's career. The result, nearly a thousand pages of scholarship, is at once a fitting tribute to the honoree and a testament to the energy and admiration of its editors.

The volume opens with a brief biography by the editors subtitled "scientist, statesman, gentleman," replete with touching anecdotes, pictures of a se-rapè-clad Paynie and Anita in Peru in 1946, and a bibliography spanning nearly 70 years. The remainder of the book is organized into two parts, each with an overview by the editors that place each contribution in the context of Pearson's interests and contributions. "Ecology, biogeography and natural history" contains 13 articles and 362 pages, while "Systematics, taxonomy and evolution" contains 15 articles and 580 pages. Although Pearson published a number of important papers on North American fauna, 24 of the 28 articles are on Neotropical mammals. In all, 86 scientists contributed articles, only 32 of whom were based in the United States (and some of those only temporarily as students). Curiously, the 24 Chileans outnumbered contributors from Argentina (17) and Peru (3) combined, countries in which Pearson conducted most of his Neotropical field work (of course, Valdivian Forest, the habitat in which Pearson focused most of his later efforts, lies mainly in Chile). Other contributions came from scientists from Bolivia, Ecuador, and Uruguay, and additional scientists participated in peer-review, 53 in all.

Collections of papers as extensive as this one inhibit detailed review because even the titles of the papers and their authorship would run on for pages. In this case, the editors have thoughtfully produced just these synopses in their sectional

overviews. Yet two of the articles in this volume could have appeared as stand-alone monographs of their own and deserve mention here. Mónica Díaz and Rubén Barquez authored a 162-page account entitled "The wild mammals of Jujuy Province, Argentina: systematics and distribution." Their article documents records of 143 species and identifies 9 others considered probable or likely to have historically occurred there. As in most such compilations in South America, one species proved to be new to science, 4 new to Argentina and 14 new to the province. In the subsequent chapter, these two authors joined David Flores in producing the 91-page article "Systematic and distribution of marsupials in Argentina: a review." This cogent account of 27 species of marsupials spans all three American orders and covers nearly a third of living species, many endemic to Argentina's varied habitats.

The editors achieved a remarkable level of editorial consistency between chapters, an achievement made more impressive with the discovery that they copyedited and formatted the papers into final page-proof. There are very few typos and misspellings. Although all papers are written in English, Spanish speakers will appreciate the inclusion of Spanish abstracts and keywords, and all readers will appreciate the volume's cost-free availability as a pdf (http://repositories.cdlib.org/ucpress/ucpz/vol_134/). There can be little doubt that Pearson would have relished this collection of science nearly as much as the homage it represents.

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