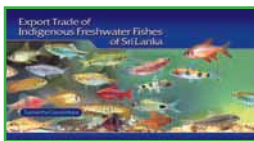


Export Trade of Indigenous Freshwater Fishes of Sri Lanka. A Monograph By Samantha Gunasekara.

Reviewed by Channa Babaradeniya



This is not just a coffee table book, but a very special publication of interesting information on indigenous freshwater fish in Sri Lanka which definitely will catch the attention of academics as well

as nature lovers.

This 10.75 X 8.25 landscaped, 136pgs, monograph printed in Singapore contains high quality colour plates of endangered fish species printed in 150gsm gold east matt art paper and outer hard cover is set up with matt laminated colour plate.

The monograph with exceptional collection of photographs of rare and endangered fish species is the first publication of this nature. As it reflects, so far no adequate attention is given on endangered fish species in Sri Lanka. The conservation has become a critical issue and no proper measures have been taken by the parties responsible with this regard.

This precious effort of Samantha Gunasekara, Deputy Director of Customs, aligned with 30 years experience in Customs in the field of biodiversity conservation, will precisely favor the fulfillment of the gaps encountered under this theme. The contents of this publication have been presented blend with his knowledge on the subject matter together with the findings of his research conducted for his Masters degree at University of Andalucia-Spain, the only

University which conduct Masters Degree and Doctorate on International Wildlife Trade. The valuable data explored on the topics of species composition, distribution of fish fauna in Sri Lanka, endangered indigenous fish in the ornamental fish export trade, their trade trends have also been widely discussed and cited gorgeously.

In this publication, moving further more Samantha Gunasekara has successfully covered some other important topics such as conservation status, benefit-cost analysis of the export trade of endangered, endemic, freshwater fish (1st attempt in Sri Lanka), legal-policy and institutional aspects related to conservation and sustainable use of freshwater fish fauna in Sri Lanka, and issues related to ornamental fish trade.

It has [no doubt], the recommendations mentioned with referred to the conservation and sustainable use of freshwater fish would be very much helpful for the policy makers and conservationists and also for the academic personnel to move further towards their objectives.

Nevertheless, it is not necessary to be an academic or a professional to refer a publication of this nature. Anyone who loves nature and who intend the protection of the environment should not let miss this magnificent piece of work in his/her own collection/archives.

ISBN 978-955-52508-0-1

Out of the Blue: A Guide to the Marine Mammals of Sri Lanka, Southern India and the Maldives.

By Howard Martenstyn.

Reviewed by Hiran Jayewardene



The stunning photograph of a sperm whale breaching as depicted on the cover of the book symbolizes not only the wealth of information it brings forth, but also reflects the painstaking work at sea which underlies this publication. It was after many voyages out to sea and an earnest prayer that made it possible for

Howard to capture this event – one that is not too common in Sri Lankan waters. The thunderclap and gigantic splash of a forty ton or more creature leaping out of the water and falling back is awesome: So is the impact of this book.

In the book, the author first takes you skillfully into the world of marine mammals setting out the historical context and Sri Lanka's historical association with them. It is most timely as the marine mammal observation industry has grown since the early 1980s to become an important element in Sri Lanka's tourism and nature conservation portfolio, and also commercially. The book fills a long felt need for a reliable guide.

He deals in a simple scholarly manner with their scientific classification and aspects of their evolution to occupy their special ecological niche, their physiology, behavioural aspects and relevance to surface observation. It provides a comprehensive introduction for the serious student as well as discerning observer – as many tourists are today, who seek a better understanding than just enjoying the visual experience of seeing mammals at sea.

The detailed catalog of the marine mammals provides an essential guide and reference point with excellent photographs many of which were personally taken by Howard in his painstaking hours at sea mostly often in a small dinghy - searching for and studying these creatures. The individual descriptions are clear and adequate. The provision of accompanying scale and distribution maps and depth guides for each species is most helpful.

In the final part of the book, the author takes the reader deeper in to the realm of the ocean environment: Essentials of geography and oceanography are explained in terms of their relevance to occurrence- distribution, behaviour and observation. It is based on his own observations of marine mammals and depth associations and later delving into the world of oceanography in the course of preparation of this book. The reader will find a simple introduction to the parameters. Howard now focuses on as an essential part of his continuing research work and sharing of his growing knowledge.

The book is not just a collection of great photographs but stands out from the many recent nature publications - not only as a coffee table book, but one which has a substantial textual content that is truly educational. It is an essential companion and reference work for nature lovers, and any serious marine mammal observer or enthusiast.

Howard Martenstyn's "Out of the Blue" should stand unrivalled as the definitive work on the marine mammals of Sri Lanka. It is a classic.

ISBN 978-955-54534-0-0