

dents interested primarily in the applied area of nematode control and utilization.

ROLAND N PERRY, *Plant Pathogen Interactions Division, Rothamsted Research, Harpenden, United Kingdom*

#### HUNTING FOR FROGS ON ELSTON: AND OTHER TALES FROM FIELD AND STREET.

By Jerry Sullivan; edited by Victor M Cassidy; illustrated by Bobby Sutton. Published by University of Chicago Press, Chicago (Illinois), in association with Chicago Wilderness. \$25.00. xvi + 303 p; ill.; no index. ISBN: 0-226-77993-9. [Columns originally appeared as a series titled Field & Street in the *Chicago Reader*.] 2004.

Most Chicagoland residents, like other urbanites, think that nature is miles away, but Sullivan looked to his own backyard. *Hunting for Frogs on Elston* collects 70 essays he has written for his Field and Street column published between 1984 and 1998 in the *Chicago Reader*, Chicago's weekly alternative paper. Sullivan had a unique passion for urban ecology and his writings bring out the naturalist in all of us. A master of the short essay (each is 1000 to 1500 words), the author captivated his audience by skillfully blending ecological theory, natural history, and humor. Of particular note was his ability to turn commonplace elements of the urban ecosystem, such as squirrel's nests, into wild and fascinating subjects of natural history study. He also captured the idiosyncratic personalities of field ecologists, reserve managers, and dedicated amateurs.

The essays are grouped into six main themes: State of the Prairie; The Seasons; Creatures Great and Small; Birds and More Birds; Plants; and People and Places. Each section presents complex ecological concepts and management dilemmas to a general readership without condescension. For example, the essays in the State of the Prairie range from mycorrhizal interactions and discussions of volunteer crews transplanting animals and plants in suburban neighborhoods to a philosophical exegesis on the importance of maintaining natural variety. Throughout, but especially in the section on People and Places, the contributions of individuals—from renowned ecologists Henry Chandler Cowles and Roger Tory Peterson to local lichenologist Rich Hyerczyk—are showcased. Essays on management expose the intricacies of working with multiple stakeholders with diverse agendas and the persistent corruption of Chicago politics. At the same time, Chicago is an exemplar for its extensive network of forest and prairie reserves as well as its array of parks and open spaces where the ecological theater is in full display. Sullivan drew

much attention to the natural history in the Forest Preserve network throughout the Chicagoland area, and readers of this book will be inspired to discover or rediscover this wonderful treasure nestled in the urban landscapes of Chicago. The essays give ecological importance to the urban landscape with its skyscrapers and shopping malls.

*Hunting for Frogs on Elston* is an excellent resource for any urban dweller with an interest in natural history. Even though the essays were written for hip urban sophisticates whose scientific background is generally limited to *Physics for Poets* and who are more interested in trendy new restaurants than in the diversity of amphibians in the sewers, the essays can be enjoyed equally by scientists and nonscientists, whether or not they have ever been to or lived in Chicago. This book also is a "must read" for any high school or college environmental science class, especially the growing field of urban ecology.

AARON M ELLISON and JESSICA L BUTLER, *Harvard Forest, Harvard University, Petersham, Massachusetts*

#### SNAKES OF THE AMERICAS: CHECKLIST AND LEXICON.

By Bob L Tipton. *Malabar (Florida): Krieger Publishing*. \$94.50. xiv + 477 p; index. ISBN: 1-57524-215-X. [CD-ROM included.] 2005.

#### BIOLOGY OF GILA MONSTERS AND BEADED LIZARDS. *Organisms and Environments, Volume 9.*

By Daniel D Beck, with contributions from Brent E Martin and Charles H Lowe; Foreword by Harry Greene; photographs by Tom Wiewandt. *Berkeley (California): University of California Press*. \$49.95. xii + 211 p + 35 pl; ill.; index. ISBN: 0-520-24357-9. 2005.

No two lizard species have spawned as much folklore, wonder, and myth as the Gila Monster (*Heloderma suspectum*) and the Beaded Lizard (*Heloderma horridum*)—the sole survivors of an ancient group of predacious lizards called the Monstersauria. More like snakes on legs, Monstersaurs are a walking contradiction: they are venomous yet do not appear to use their venom for subduing prey. Their mottled patterns mingle with the broken shadows and textures of their desert and tropical dry forest habitats, yet their bright open mouths hiss a bold warning that a nasty bite awaits those who advance further. And although Gila Monster venom produces excruciating pain, it also contains a peptide that has become a promising new drug for treating Type 2 diabetes. Perhaps the ultimate paradox is that Monstersaurs are among the most famous of the lizards, yet until quite recently they