

D. Whitmarsh: Economic management of marine living resources—A practical introduction. Earthscan, London, 2011, XV + 171 pp., £24.99 (Paperback), ISBN 978-1-84971-259-0

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According to the author's preface, this slim volume was written with the intention of providing the non-specialist reader with an overview of the economic importance and significance of marine living resources. The hope is expressed that the book will find a niche as a textbook for students with interests in fisheries and aquaculture, marine conservation, environmental science and coastal-zone management. Little or no prior knowledge of economics is assumed, but it is expected that readers have a basic grounding in statistics. I am a marine biologist by training, have no formal background in economics and have teaching and research interests in marine resources and aquaculture; as such I seem to be representative of the target audience and appear suited to undertake an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of this book.

The prime focus in the book is on commercial fisheries, although there are some case studies that cover aquaculture, and there is also mention of marine habitats that are of particular interest to conservationists and marine environmental managers; for example, mangroves, coral reefs and sea-grass meadows. The book is made up of seven short chapters, three appendices presenting the theoretical background for some of the worked examples, a reference list and guide to further reading, and an index. The first two chapters present brief overviews of marine resources, causes of, and problems arising from, overfishing and the need for management of exploitable living marine resources. There are then a couple of chapters that provide an introduction to the practicalities of collecting and analysing socio-economic data, and their use in appraisal and management. Seafood products and markets are discussed in Chapter 5, including an introduction to the analysis of markets and prices in relation to fluctuations in supply and demand. The author also considers the influence of competition and market structure on seafood prices. Chapter 6 covers marine pollution and commercial fisheries, with a focus on oil pollution, using case studies from some high-profile tanker groundings and the subsequent oil-spills as illustrations. The final chapter of the book deals with ecosystem services considers the socio-economic benefits associated with coastal habitats, such as mangroves, coral reefs,

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sea-grass meadows and salt-marshes, and gives an account of valuation methods and scoring procedures for the assessment of environmental attributes and amenities.

The text is easy to read, and the basic principles are presented clearly in straightforward language. The text is complemented by a series of simple line diagrams and graphs and often accompanied by worked examples. Nonetheless, the book does have a few shortcomings; most are relatively inconsequential and give little cause for complaint. For example, I would have liked the author to use formal names of all fish species, and I also noted a few instances where there was lack of concordance between text and figures. Such minor discrepancies could mislead or confuse. One example relates to the description of fishmeal production given in Chapter 1; in the text, the main species used for fishmeal production are listed as anchoveta, menhaden, sardine and sprat (page 11), but in Figure 1.5, the impression is given that herring, sardine and sprat are the dominant species, and towards the end of the chapter (page 17), it is implied that sand-eel fisheries are important determinants of fishmeal production. I also felt that some of the figures and photographs conveyed little information, and that the figure legends were sometimes inadequate; Figures 1.9 and 1.10 provide a case in point. In addition, there are one or two printing errors; for example, on page 37 one of the references to Figure 2.7 should be a reference to Figure 2.8, and there have also been problems with the reproduction of Figures 5.1 and 5.2.

Economic management of marine living resources is a useful primer for undergraduate students taking degree programmes in fisheries science, aquaculture, environmental science and conservation biology, but those wishing to specialise in fisheries and resource management will need to widen their search to delve deeper into the subject matter. The cited literature, along with the guide to further reading presented towards the end of the book will be helpful to such students, and provide them with a useful starting point for their search.

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