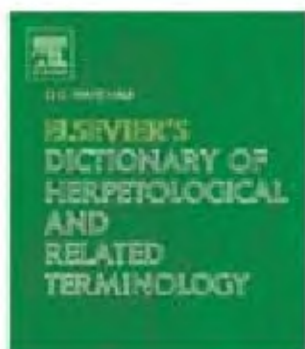


works in the area of optical multiplexing that have designed equipments specifically for the fast-growing Indian and Chinese markets. It should also be noted that telecom manufacturing is making a slow re-appearance through the recent setting-up of manufacturing facilities by multinational companies like Nokia and Flextronics.

In conclusion, the main contribution of Desai's book is that it provides a rich account of the recent history of telecommunications services in India. The appendices are full of minute details of the different licences, their partnerships and equity arrangements. This database would be of great use to future students of the telecom industry in India, though this reviewer did not find the data vital for the arguments presented in the book.

RISHIKESHA T. KRISHNAN

*Indian Institute of Management Bangalore,
Bannerghatta Road,
Bangalore 560 076, India
e-mail: rishi@iimb.ernet.in*



Elsevier's Dictionary of Herpetological and Related Terminology. David C. Wareham. Elsevier B.V. Radarweg 29, P.O. Box 211, 1000 AE Amsterdam, The Netherlands. 2005. 240 pp. Price: US \$93.50.

Mark O'Shea rightly points out in the foreword of this book that science is governed by specialized words and phrases, just as law, politics and economics have their own languages, which are often incom-

prehensible to outsiders. Herpetology, like any other branch of science, is full of specialized words and terms. Some words are difficult to pronounce and others are confusingly similar in appearance, but differ drastically in meaning. For example, the words 'parotid gland' (serous salivary gland in mammals) and 'parotoid gland' (external wart-like, toxin-secreting glands in many amphibians) appear very similar, but have substantially different meanings. Also, herpetologists sometime use common words to describe species, specialized structures and processes. For instance, 'helmet' is used to describe the bony structure on the top and back of the skull of certain lizards (especially *Basiliscus*), 'jungle chicken' is a common name for the world's largest frog (*Conraua goliath*) and the term 'milk' refers to venom extracted from venomous reptiles. Most non-herpetologists/non-biologists are unaware of such terms and are afraid to use them in case they pronounce them incorrectly or use them improperly. However, science is 'governed' but not hampered by such jargon. Only people, who do not understand the language of science are hampered by these words and this is where a dictionary such as this is important for a wide audience including herpetologists, non-herpetologists and anyone interested in science.

A dictionary of herpetology is not a new idea. There are two previous books on the same subject *Dictionary of Herpetology. A Brief and Meaningful Definition of Words and Terms used in Herpetology* by James A. Peters, Hafner Publishing Company, 1964 and *Reptile and Amphibian Keepers Dictionary: An A to Z Herpetology* compiled by David C. Wareham, Blandford Press, 1993. However, like all branches of science, herpetology moves on; new discoveries and observations are continuously being made and with them new descriptive terms and phrases are regularly being created. So an updated compendium like *Elsevier's Dictionary of Herpetological and Related Terminology* is timely indeed.

Bound in leather-grain, olive-green hardback with high quality finish, this book contains more than 3100 terms and

definitions. The dictionary has more than 1000 new definitions and terms than the previous dictionaries. The entries are fully cross-referenced; include the basic technical terms relating to the external features of reptiles and amphibians (e.g. clitoris, casque, escutcheon, egg-tooth, helmet, iridescence, etc.), the herpetological families (e.g. Bufonidae, Iguanidae, Viperidae, etc.), the biological processes (e.g. somatolysis, technophagy, etc.), selected biographies (e.g. Bellaris, Dumeril, Daudin, Gray, Gunther, FitzSimons, etc.), herpetological jargon (e.g. polliwog, hood, in-egg, etc.) and many other terms and expressions ranging from the fields of anatomy, ecology, zoogeography, toxicology, to veterinary science, animal behaviour, and husbandry. The dictionary also includes abbreviations, acronyms and symbols relevant to the study and conservation of amphibians and reptiles.

Overall, the dictionary is well compiled with concise and informative definitions of the characteristic vocabulary used by herpetologists. However, it has a few minor shortcomings. It is devoid of fine line drawings, which accompany many of the definitions; an attractive feature of previous dictionaries. The author rarely makes an effort to include many of the complex words and terms related to morphology and reproduction in amphibians and reptiles (e.g. allochronic, germinal bed, polyautochronic, pelvic aperture, residual yolk, etc.). Obviously, one can understand that it is impossible to include every single herpetological term ever devised in a single volume. Apart from this, the volume is a useful source of reference to all who are either actively or passively involved in some aspects of biology, whether they be keepers, curators, breeders, researchers, teachers or students. This fine dictionary deserves a place in personal book collections and libraries.

RAJKUMAR S. RADDER

*The School of Biological Sciences A08,
University of Sydney,
NSW 2006, Australia
e-mail: raj@mail.usyd.edu.au*