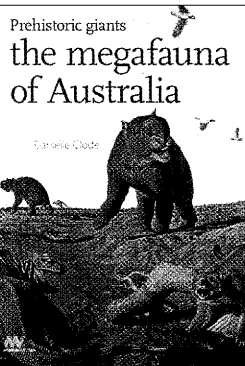


BOOK REVIEWS

CLIMATE

The Science, Impacts and Solutions

A. BARRIE PITTOCK



Climate Change: the Science, Impacts and Solutions

by A. Barrie Pittock. CSIRO Publishing, 2009. RRP \$49.95.

BARRIE PITTOCK'S EXTENSIVELY revised second edition of his excellent book on climate change, though designed as a text book, is a very accessible and up-to-date account of the subject.

If anyone has been worried by claims from climate change sceptics, the answers are almost certainly here. For one, he gives a good account of the great range of factors affecting climate change, so we can put recent human contributions in perspective.

He also discusses the development of models for predicting impacts, and explains the need to apply the 'precautionary principle'.

And a chapter on action to mitigate climate change gives us some useful tools to employ.

His glossary will prove very welcome. He doesn't, for example, just give you the name of an organisation behind an acronym, but goes on to tell you what they do.

This is an authoritative account of all aspects of climate change, by the man who led the CSIRO's Climate Impact Group before his retirement, and has since been a significant contributing author to the four major reports of the IPCC. It is a voice for sanity on the subject, a compelling read and a call for action.

— Phil Ingamells

Prehistoric giants: the megafauna of Australia

by Danielle Clode. Museum Victoria 2009. Paperback, 72 pages, RRP \$24.95.

IN COMPARISON WITH THE ANCIENTS', said the 12th-century scholastic Bernard de Chartres, 'we stand like dwarves on the shoulders of giants'.

He probably wasn't thinking of giant horned tortoises weighing three-quarters of a tonne, or diprotodons the size of a 4WD.

Nevertheless, these bizarre creatures shared the Australian landscape with its earliest human inhabitants, and their descendants include many of Australia's bird and animal species.

Prehistoric giants offers readers a tantalising glimpse into an era when big really was beautiful: Australia 60 000 years ago.

Author Danielle Clode opens with a vivid description of a female thylacoleo (marsupial lion) stalking and killing a young diprotodon.

Throughout, Clode carefully explains the sources of information (fossil remnants,

Aboriginal rock art paintings, comparisons with existing species) and emphasises the limits to our current knowledge.

The big question—why did the megafauna disappear?—remains unanswered. But Clode argues that identifying a culprit is less important than realising that we humans have a collective responsibility to ensure that present-day species do not disappear as the megafauna did.

Author Danielle Clode will give a talk and sign copies of her book at the Melbourne Museum's new 'Dinosaur Walk' exhibition at 2pm on **Sunday 14 June**.

Museum Victoria is offering VNPA members a 10% discount on the book. Call at the Museum Shop before 31 July, phone 8341 7620 or see www.museumvictoria.com.au

— Reviewer Hilary Howes is a PhD student in Pacific history at the ANU, Canberra.

Old Growth: Australia's remaining ancient forests

by Peter McConchie. Hardie Grant Books 2009. Hard cover, 150 pages, RRP \$65.00. Special offer to VNPA members: \$55.00, plus postage.

SIXTEEN PHOTOGRAPHERS Contributed to this beautifully presented coffee table book, produced 'to draw attention to the shameful way we continue to destroy [old-growth forests]'.

Their magnificent photos cover forests in Tasmania, Victoria, NSW, Queensland and WA, and feature amazing scenes of gigantic eucalypts, boabs, myrtle beech and many more.

"Since the first colonial axe struck until now," says Peter McConchie in his Introduction, "92% of Australian old growth has been destroyed ...

4% is within national parks and conservation reserves." Much of the remaining 4% is targeted for logging.

A section at the end of the book lists conservation organisations and actions we can all take to save forests.

"The protection of these forests is both urgent and achievable," says McConchie.

The book would be a wonderful present for that special person who loves trees, forests and all of nature—or who should!

— Michael Howes

