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Fish Conservation: A Guide to Understanding and Restoring Global Aquatic Biodiversity and Fishery Resources by Gene S. Helfman

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Author

Miller, Ryder W.

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Review: Fish Conservation: A Guide to Understanding and Restoring Global Aquatic Biodiversity and Fishery Resources
By Gene S. Helfman

Reviewed by Ryder W. Miller

Helfman, Gene S. *Fish Conservation: A Guide to Understanding and Restoring Global Aquatic Biodiversity and Fishery Resources*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2007. 584 p. ISBN 978-1-55963-596-7. \$85.00, Cloth. Recycled, acid free paper.

Gene S. Helfman (emeritus professor at the Institute of Ecology and the Program in Conservation Ecology and Sustainability Development at the University of Georgia, Athens) steps up to the plate to produce a textbook focusing on the conservation biology research that has accumulated about our sometimes forgotten fish and marine mammal relatives.

One should have taken a course in Ichthyology to better appreciate the text and understand all the technical terms, but thankfully there is a glossary. The work is lively, with references to popular works by famous marine environmentalists and writers who have focused on oceanic issues.

There are over 2000 references in this book to print materials, and it also includes websites where one can see what has progressed in the areas covered since this mammoth work was published in 2007. This well-written textbook, with its occasional signs of flair, is comprehensive, modest, and alarming. Helfman documents the damage we have caused to marine life. Helfman also does not hide his perspective as a fisherman, fish consumer, and marine conservationist.

The textbook is international in scope, critical, and seeks to thoroughly cover all the factors that affect fish. One will find discussion of ecosystem management approaches, marine protected areas, new initiatives in sustainable conservation, aqua-culture, alien species, water quality, damming, habitat modification, over-fishing, coral reefs, live fish trade, aquariums, advocacy, and more.

Helfman is a knowledgeable champion of protecting fish, which are often unappreciated because they are not as warm and fuzzy as other animals. Despite their unattractive appearance, billions of people depend upon fish as a source of protein. Some of the fish species consumed have been on the way to becoming endangered, so obviously conservation has not always been enough to protect these species. The Sustainable Seafood Consumption Movement, which Helfman champions and advertises, may also not be enough to reverse this trend. He does call for more conservation actions and research to answer nagging questions.

Ryder W. Miller <dolphin1965@hotmail.com>, Freelance environmental and science reporter who has been published in Sierra Magazine, California Coast & Ocean, California Wild, and Hydrosphere.

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