Book Review

Shore Fishes of Easter Island, John E. Randall & Alfredo Cea Egaña. Mata Ki Te Ragi Foundation & University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 176 pp., 2011. First Edition, ISBN 978-0-8248-3564-4. Hard cover. Price US\$35.-

Oceania is most probably one of the greatest attractions for ichthyologists from all over the globe. The amount of species, and their most amazing diversity in different aspects (shape, colour, behaviour, life cycle, etc.) make it a rich ichthyofauna, as well as an enormous challenge, when it comes to figure out its evolutionary history, a task which knows no boundaries—is hard to dimension. On the East boundary of the Oceania lie two great geographic landmarks: Easter Island and Salas y Gomez Island both separated by about four hundred kilometers in the vast ocean. The meaning or biological impact of such separation still has not been fully discovered. Farther towards the East are located Juan Fernandez Island and Desventuradas Islands which also have great similarity in ichthyofauna with Oceania more so than with the nearing South America. Easter Island turns out to be a major point of importance to better understand the taxonomy and systematics of the shore ichthyofauna in the south Pacific Ocean, and most important for possible interpretations on the origin of the south eastern Pacific littoral ichthyofauna, as that of the Chilean coastline. The high degree of endemism and its fish phylogenetics are key to reconstructing different historical taxa. But before discussing these matters it is necessary to get acquainted with these fishes, know how to differentiate/ identify them as well as their biology and so on, among other needs. There is also the possibility of using newer methods in searching coherence and consistency and work with them in different ways. In order to get ahead it has been necessary to know about Easter Island's ichthyofauna, and John E. Randall and Alfredo Cea Egaña show us in this book the wide and deep knowledge they have about Easter Island's those fishes, which was already well known by many of us.

The book begins with an overall view of man's history in the island which is basic to understand its culture in relation to their fishes. Followed by a brief history about Easter Island's ichthyology allowing a better understanding of the many taxonomic and systematic changes which have modified the existing knowledge since the discovery of the first fishes there studied.

A rather brief chapter on Zoogeography follows afterwards, referring mainly to fishes with enlightening contributions to biology in relation to the species inhabiting Easter Island's

shore. Another chapter worth mentioning deals with Preservation, in which explicit reasons are given to sustain the creation of Marine Reserves in Easter Island.

Most of the book points to describing each fish family and within each family a description of each constituent species. Ichthyofauna up to two hundred meters below sea level is considered and each species is magnificently illustrated in two hundred ten colour photographs (Randall's photography technique is well known world wide) and exceptionally, there are a few careful hand drawings. The chapter mentioned here begins with chondrichthyans and ends with bony fishes belonging to the family Diodontidae, following from the least evolved to the supposedly most evolved ones. Each species is described mainly by its morphology and external colouring. A short but complete description of their geographical distribution is included towards the last pages. Finally, a few remarks in reference to their situation in the island, whether they are well known species or not among the inhabitants, the similarities with other species, feeding information and range in size among others. In order to write that chapter it has been necessary to search for existing bases in specialized publications and previous studies, such as Adam (1945), De Buen (1963), DiSalvo *et al.* (1988), Rendahl (1921) and Yañez-Arancibia (1975) among many others.

A useful and necessary systematic checklist of the species follows, indicating basic distribution data for each one. A total of one hundred seventy three species has been proven together with a high degree of endemism. The best back up is found in the complete bibliographic reference. Furthermore, a Glossary is added to better understand the text by non-specialized readers and at the end an Index with common and scientific names included.

This work is the result of many years of studies compiling experiences and information. Both authors are widely experienced in the field of Easter Island's fishes and wildlife as much as their vision regarding Easter Island's meaning altogether with its context in the South Pacific, its evolving future and its present scenery considering the anthropogenic changes. It will be an excellent tool for those scientists who are dedicated to studying life in the sea as well as students, professionals from different fields which are involved with Easter Island, authorities in charge of managing Easter Island's resources and any aspects involved with the island's reality.

This book goes beyond specialists' needs although it strongly deals with science it has been written in such a way that it may be understood by a wide variety of readers.

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