

## BOOK REVIEW

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### *Estimating abundance of African wildlife: an aid to adaptive management*, by Hugo Jachmann

Kluwer Academic Publishers; price: GBP 77; ISBN 0 7923 7959 4

review by Deborah Gibson and Colin Craig

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Central to the conservation and management of wildlife in Africa is the enumeration and monitoring of wild animal populations. This is the subject of *Estimating abundance of African wildlife: an aid to adaptive management*, by Hugo Jachmann, a wildlife biologist with 23 years of experience in African wildlife management.

Access to the wide literature on the subject is sometimes difficult, and Jachmann's book aims to provide students, ecologists and wildlife managers with a comprehensive and self-contained practical guide to most of the available techniques. It starts with an introduction to, and classification of, wildlife counting methods. A brief overview on technique selection leads to a chapter explaining the theory and statistics involved in sample counting and subsequent chapters provide details of the various methods. The book ends with a concise guide to the selection of a method appropriate to the species and objectives under a variety of circumstances.

Despite its subtitle, the book does not deal with how to incorporate population monitoring into an adaptive management system and only partly fulfils its promise in other regards. It does provide a good overview of methods appropriate to African animals, and it contains much useful detail that will aid in the implementation of surveys. But it falls short of providing a new stand-alone practical guide.

While some methods are covered in enough detail to enable the reader to carry out the work, this is the exception, and it is doubtful if even key methods such as aerial sample counts or dung counts could be carried out without reference to other literature.

There would have been more space for practical details if theoretical sections could have been cut. However, although disclaiming expertise beyond that of an ecologist, Jachmann attempts discussions of the statistics that would have been better dealt with by reference to other works. This has produced sections that are unclear, potentially misleading or which contain examples whose interpretation is arguable.

Many of the book's shortcomings could have been avoided with good editing. In fact, the general standard of publishing is poor; tables that could easily fit on a page are often split and continued overleaf, equations look as though they have been written on an inferior word processor and the standard of illustrations is poor. The presentation has not done justice to the author or the subject.

Provided it is used critically, *Estimating abundance of African wildlife* could be a useful addition to the already available works on the subject, but at a cost of over USD 100 it is doubtful if many will add it to their libraries.