

delay in rebounding from them. Also, major taxa vary quite dramatically in the rate of divergence and apparent speciation. As Sepkowski argues, much of the pattern of biodiversity reflects these characteristic (and 'heritable') rates of extinction and speciation, yet the reasons remain 'one of the great unsolved problems of macroevolution'.

The breadth of approach illustrated in this volume distinguishes it from similar recent publications. It is an excellent compilation of views of speciation and biodiversity (although the absence of any chapters on the plant or microbial kingdoms is remarkable). I would describe it as essential reading for anyone with an interest in speciation, were it not for the fact that more or less the same publications are also available in a volume of the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (following a meeting in 1997). As I gaze at the pile of as yet unread, journals and books accumulating in a corner of my office, I am not very appreciative of any trend in publishing which artificially escalates this further. Either of these two publications is essential reading – to publish both independently seems unnecessary.

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**Basic Human Genetics (2nd edn).** Elaine J. Mange and Arthur P. Mange. Sinauer Associates, Inc., Sunderland, Massachusetts. 1999. Pp. 530. Price £27.95, paperback. ISBN 0 87893 497 9.

I found this book this book to be a pleasure to read: it was attractive, accessible and full of surprises. In chapter one I did not expect to start reading a detective story about phenylketonuria, but found myself enjoying this style of teaching. I can understand how the first edition of this book won its

awards from the American Medical Writers Association and others: the unpretentious style and accessibility of content will endear it to students of science as well as medicine, and this doctor found it refreshing to update myself in such an easy manner!

The book starts well with its contents pages: first an overview to find easily what the book covers, and then a more detailed guide to contents. A full, detailed index which works, is also worth mentioning. The 'boxes' are a useful addition to the main chapters, providing extra reading for those who wish it. The diagrams are on the whole a joy, especially those in three dimensions. The collection of key terms at the end of each chapter brought back memories of my own learning style as a student, which worked for me, and which I am sure today's students will find invaluable. The questions, with answers to check responses, will be an invaluable guide to most students, although I did find some answers to be rather dogmatic in their statements. There is room for more discussion in some of them.

Relevant social and ethical issues are raised in many of the chapters, firmly placing the science of this book in the context of those people with whom it concerns itself. It is not a concise book, and the conversational style this produces may not appeal to every scientist.

The book is honest when it admits it does not cover every aspect of the problems upon which it touches, but it does give a bibliography and comments upon further reading. Like many texts from the USA, I am sorry that it fails to mention major works by British authors in some instances, for example Peter Harper's book on Huntington Disease. The addition of a CD will appeal to students; I only hope they also take the time to read this enjoyable, informative book.

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## Books received

**Migration and Colonization in Human Microevolution.** Alan G. Fix. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1999. Pp. 236. Price £40.00, hardback. ISBN 0 521 59206 2.

**Analysis of Human Genetic Linkage (3rd edn).** Jurg Ott. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore. 1999. Pp. 382. Price £38.00, hardback. ISBN 0 8018 6140 3.

**The Genetics of Cattle.** R. Fries and A. Ruvinsky (eds). CAB International, Wallingford. 1999. Pp. 710. Price £99.50, hardback. ISBN 0 85199 258 7.

**Agricultural Value of Plant Genetic Resources.** R. E. Evenson, D. Gollin and V. Santaniello (eds). CAB International,

Wallingford. 1998. Pp. 285. Price £40.00, hardback. ISBN 0 85199 295 1.

**Transgenic Animals in Agriculture.** J. D. Murray, G. B. Anderson, A. M. Oberbauer and M. M. McGloghlin (eds). CAB International, Wallingford. 1999. Pp. 290. Price £55.00, hardback. ISBN 0 85199 293 5.

**In Situ Hybridization Protocols (2nd edn).** Ian A. Darby (ed.). Humana Press, Totowa, N.J. 2000. Pp. 343. Price \$79.50, hardback. ISBN 0 896 03686 3.