

chronic spills she refers back to Figures 2.8 (p. 28). Unfortunately Figure 2.8 presents the annual number of spills by size and has nothing on geographic location of spills.

The author says that an oil spill “. . . killed miles of mangroves . . . (p. 137).” A more accurate statement would present this in area measurements and not a just linear distance.

The author also states, “The (Arabian) Gulf is one of the busiest oil transport arteries in the world—half of the world’s oil passes through this region . . . (p. 149).” How can the Gulf be just “one of the busiest oil transport arteries” when half of the world’s oil passes through this region? If the author’s statement is correct, then the Gulf must be THE busiest oil transport artery since the other half must be divided amongst all the rest of the oil transportation arteries!

On mortality estimates the author states, “Unlike most other groups of animals there are accurate counts of dead birds . . . (p. 156).” This is a bit questionable unless qualified since these “accurate” counts of dead bodies are always the minimum mortality. Total mortality numbers are projections from minimum numbers of individuals (MNI) and therefore always estimates as mentioned on pp. 165–166. A more accurate mortality estimate of bird mortality is possible but actual numbers are not!

In discussing mammals, the author states that marine mammals include “. . . polar bears, which live in the tundra (p. 179).” Although it is true that polar bears spend most of their lives on sea ice, they require land to give birth and for many other activities; it is questionable whether they are “marine mammals.” And if they are marine mammals, would they “live in the tundra”?

There are problems with the writing style. For example, the author uses the personal pronoun “I” at the beginning of almost every chapter and when trying to impress the reader,

such as on p. 134 where she states, “In some places, the effect is obvious to me only because I know every detail of the creeks and marshes.” I question statements by the author such as in a discussion of the author’s upcoming trip to Alaska in which she states “The trip is daunting, since I recently broke my ankle while in Indonesia, and the cast came off only days before I am to leave for Alaska (p. 7).” Am I supposed to be impressed that the author just came back from Indonesia? Feel sorry for her? Marvel at her stamina and professional dedication? The statement is inappropriate in a scientific publication. The author also states, “All of the photographs were taken by the author unless otherwise noted in the caption.” However, several photographs are of the author in the field, and although the photographs could have been taken using a timer on a camera, they were more likely taken by a colleague. Also her “field attire,” including rings on every finger, in these photos (Figures 1.2 and 12.1) does not instill one with much confidence that she is “field savvy” or had any intention of actually getting up close and personal with an oil spill.

Does any one or two of my above criticisms make the book useless? No, but in their entirety they do make other statements by the author suspect. Although the author may be a respected authority on certain aspects of oil spills and a good scientist, she has lost credibility by her shoddy presentation in *Oil Spills*. Am I being too picky on some of these points? Of course, but I feel that the examples cited—and there are others—suggest that this book did not receive the scholarly attention or critical review required to make it a significant contribution to the topic being addressed.

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## BOOKS, JOURNALS AND REPORTS RECEIVED

### BOOKS RECEIVED

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Otvos, E.G., 1997. **Guidebook, Louisiana to Northwest Florida Field Trip. Northeastern Gulf Coastal Plain Revisited: Neogene and Quaternary Units and Events—Old and New Concepts.** New Orleans, Louisiana: Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies Annual Meeting (18–19 October 1997), 143p.

Wolf, F.C.J., 1997. **Hydrodynamics, Sediment Transport, and Daily Morphological Development of a Bar-Beach System.** Utrecht: The Royal Dutch Geographical Society, Faculty of Geographical Sciences, Utrecht University, 276p. ISBN 90-6809-252-9. Dfl 40.00 post paid.

**Acta Oceanologica Sinica (Chinese Journal of Oceanology)**, 1997, Volume 19, Numbers 3 and 4. The Library of Chinese Academy of Sciences, 8 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Zhongguancun, Beijing, China.

**Oceanologica Acta (European Journal of Oceanology)**, 1997, Volume 20, Number 5. Gauthier-Villars, 141 rue de Javel, F-75747 Paris Cedex 15, France.