
Noteworthy Books

Received by the *Southeastern Naturalist*, Issue 20/3, 2021

The Palmetto Book: Histories and Mysteries of the Cabbage Palm. Jono Miller. 2021. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, FL. 312 pp. \$28.00, hardcover. ISBN: 9780813066806. The Palmetto, also known as the Cabbage Palm or Sabal Palmetto, is an iconic part of the southeastern American landscape and the state tree of Florida and South Carolina. In *The Palmetto Book*, Jono Miller offers surprising facts and dispels common myths about an important native plant that remains largely misunderstood. He answers basic questions such as: Are palms trees? When should Palmettos be pruned? What is swamp cabbage and how do you prepare it? How can these plants be both flammable and fireproof? Based on historical research, Miller argues that Cabbage Palms can live for more than 2 centuries. Delving into biology, Miller describes the anatomy of palm fronds and their crisscrossed leaf bases, called bootjacks. He traces the underground “saxophone” structure of the young plant’s root system. He explores the importance of Palmettos for many wildlife species, including Florida Scrub-Jays and Honey Bees. Miller also documents how Palmettos can pose problems for native habitats, citrus groves, and home landscapes. From Low Country sweet-grass baskets to Seminole chickees and an Elvis Presley movie set, the story of the Cabbage Palm touches on numerous dimensions of the natural and cultural history of the Southeast. Exploring both the past and present of this distinctive species, *The Palmetto Book* is a fascinating and enlightening journey.

The Florida Manatee: Biology and Conservation, Second Edition. Roger L. Reep and Robert K. Bonde. 2021. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, FL. 352 pp. \$32.00, softcover. ISBN: 9780813066820. From 2 scientists who have been at the forefront of Manatee research for over 3 decades, *The Florida Manatee* offers an engaging, accessible introduction to Manatee biology, including communication, diet, long-distance migration, and much more. This second edition is updated with new scientific research, as well as discussions of recent conservation efforts—largely driven by Manatee injuries and

deaths resulting from boat collisions—that have contributed to the robust growth of Manatee numbers in Florida. It also includes the latest predictions for Manatee populations and health in the future, both in Florida and worldwide. This is the perfect book for anyone seeking the most comprehensive, current information on this fascinating marine mammal.

Kennesaw: Natural History of a Southern Mountain. Sean P. Graham. 2021. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, AL. 200 pp. \$24.95, softcover. ISBN: 9780817359997. Written for a diverse range of readers and park visitors, *Kennesaw: Natural History of a Southern Mountain* provides a comprehensive exploration of the entire park punctuated with humor, colorful anecdotes, and striking photographs of the landscape. Sean P. Graham begins with a brief summary of the park’s human history before transitioning to a discussion of the mountain’s nature, including its unique geology, vegetation, animals, and plant-animal interactions. Graham also focuses on Kennesaw Mountain’s most important ecological and conservation attribute—its status as a globally important bird refuge. An insightful chapter on bird watching and the region’s migrating bird populations includes details on migratory patterns, birding hot spots, and the mountain’s avian significance. An epilogue revisits the park’s Civil War history, describing how Union veterans pushed for establishment of the park as a memorial, inadvertently creating a priceless biological preserve in the process.

The *Southeastern Naturalist* welcomes submissions of review copies of books that publishers or authors would like to recommend to the journal’s readership and are relevant to the journal’s mission of publishing information about the natural history of the southeastern US. Accompanying short, descriptive summaries of the text are also welcome.