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SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND ECOLOGY

With this book,¹ a pleasing balance has been struck between a broad view of a region's ecology and a field-guide approach to its plants and animals. Southern New England, as here defined, includes extreme southeastern New Hampshire, central and eastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and all but the extreme northwestern corner of Connecticut. Within this area, many students of natural history, amateur and professional ecologists, environmental groups, schools, and colleges will find this guide to be a useful addition to their libraries.

The bulk of the book consists of descriptions of the region's terrestrial and wetland communities. These have been divided into 13 community types with the oak forest (70 pages) and old field (30 pages) receiving the most extensive treatment; such wetland communities as the alder-willow swamp and conifer swamp are covered in less than ten pages. The discussion of each community type consists primarily of descriptive paragraphs on the identification and habitat requirements of the predominant plants including line drawings

for many species. A separate section of 60 pages treats the vertebrates of the region with identification and ecological data for the more commonly encountered amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. For birds, the presentation is limited to general comments on birding, attracting birds, and avian ecology since coverage of individual species would have greatly increased the text's size.

A major strength of the book is the 80 page section on plant geography and ecology which covers such topics as forest history, microclimate, soil, and succession—all specifically relating to southern New England. This discussion is a clear and accurate introduction to these topics which can be further investigated through the references listed in the annotated bibliography.

Overall, this book is an excellent contribution; well organized, factually accurate, clearly written, and meticulously proofread. It should be useful to anyone interested in the region's ecology and could also be considered as a text or supplementary text for courses in field ecology.

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¹ Jorgensen, Neil. 1978. *A Sierra Club naturalist's guide—Southern New England*. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco. xxi + 417 p. \$9.95 (paper), \$15.00 (cloth).

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