

BOOKS RECEIVED

Hostile Habitats: Scotland's Mountain Environment, editors Nick Kempe and Mark Wrightham, Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 2006, 256pp, ISBN 0 907521 93 2, £15.00.

Subtitled 'A hillwalkers' guide to the landscape and wildlife' there are sections covering: Geological Foundations; the Mountain Landscape; Vegetation Cover; Invertebrate Life; Mountain Birds; Mammals, Reptiles, Amphibians and Fish; Human Traces; and the Future of Our Mountains. Although anyone with a specialist interest will need more, its very breadth means that almost everyone will learn something. Most sections have a general introduction, and then pages on identification of the mountain species. There are lots of excellent illustrations, and the book is a real pleasure to browse.

Scotland's Mountain Ridges, Dan Bailey, Cicerone Press, 2006, 253pp, ISBN 10 1 85284 469 8, £17.95.

In larger format than the usual pocket-sized Cicerone Guides, and illustrated with many spectacular photographs, this unusual book aims to plug the gap between scrambling guides for hillwalkers and climbing guides which tend to skip over easier routes. Difficulty ranges therefore from grade 1/2 scrambles to Severe (with one HS and one VS) for summer climbs, and up to grade III winter ascents. It covers many of the great Scottish ridges, 48 in all, with full details of the approach, extracts from OS maps, and descriptions of the climb itself. A good antidote to the attractions of indoor walls, and sport climbing!

Walking the Munros, Volume 1: Southern, Central & Western Highlands, Volume 2: Northern Highlands and Cairngorms, Steve Kew, Cicerone Press, 2004, 269pp and 303pp, ISBN 1 85284 402 7 and 1 85284 403 5, £12.00 each.

Walking in the Cairngorms, Ronald Turnbull, Cicerone Press, 2005, 317pp, ISBN 1 85284 452 3

The usual clear and careful Cicerone productions, and if you were starting from scratch certainly worth considering. Parking places, maps, accommodation suggestions, access information etc. The two volumes on the Munros give rather more information on each route than in the standard SMC Guide, and have the usual lists to tick (though only of Munros, not tops). The Cairngorms guide to 'walks, trails and scrambles' has 102 routes, of which around two-thirds are graded as 'mountain' and include 17 scrambles, with the remainder split between low- and mid-level. One can only regret, however, the increasingly prescriptive nature of such guides, almost eliminating the thrill of setting out into the unknown with just your imagination and a map.