The text, by Tony Ayling, is well organized and informative. Beginning with a brief introduction and tips on how best to use the book, a concise section on classification of fishes with simple line drawings of representative members of the 170 families found in the area, and proceeding to descriptions of the different species, in presumed evolutionary sequence (i.e. Agnatha, Chondrichtyes, Osteichthytes).

Ayling has attempted to standardize and update nomenclature through extensive research and lists the currently correct bi-nominal first with synonyms (if any) in parentheses. As some species have worldwide distribution in the temperate zones of both hemispheres and have been variously described and named at different locations, this was no small task. Synonymy is, and will continue to be, a plague on taxonomists thanks to the endless diversity within species. Efforts to eliminate confusion in the identification of beasts are always welcome.

Illustrations are essential to books of this sort and Geoffrey Cox has done a fine job in preparing the 180 color plates. Nearly all the color plates were painted from freshly-caught specimens and effort was made to present accurate morphology and coloration. The 475 line drawings by Ayling are clear and finely detailed.

The combination of descriptive text, clear illustrations, glossary, and species index should enable most readers to identify specimens easily. For the occasional difficult or unique find, the non-professional reader is directed to museums or universities with fish collections. Professional users are presumed to know the appropriate steps to take when confronted with an unreported genus or species.

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This is a compilation of the author's publications on the beaches of Tunisia. The French seem particularly fond of this type of volume; on one hand one might take the somewhat cynical view that this is a way of improving one's CV, as well as duping the scientific public into purchasing another copy of old material. On the other hand perhaps it is just a more honest approach. . . . However, there is merit in putting together a little volume like this, comprising sixteen papers from a variety of somewhat obscure journals — for example the Revue Tunisienne de Geographie (source of five articles) and Bulletin de la Société Languedocienne de Geographie (source of two).

The Tunisian coast borders the Mediterranean. It includes many coastal types, ranging from the sandy coastforms discussed in this book, to rock cliffs and extensive shallow lagoons. Paskoff's approach is essentially morphological, using conventional map and photo interpretation to delimit coastal changes. Only the simplest meteorological and geological data are included, and there is little discussion of process. Many concepts appear to have been taken 'off-the-shelf,' for example the Bruun Rule and coastal compartments and cells. Rising sea level is widely cited as a cause of shore erosion in Tunisia, yet as far as I can tell no actual data are presented on the subject. Paskoff is content to refer to earlier work elsewhere in the Mediterranean Sea, which may be a little dangerous, given sites like Venice. This lack of Tunisian data is obscured somewhat in individual articles by cross-citations to the author's previous papers. However, I appreciate only too well the difficulties in working in a country where there is no tradition in this type of work. It may be that 'second-hand' information is required to galvanize local authorities into collecting their own.

The book is in French, with occasional lapses into English. It would have been nice if the author had added an introductory chapter with a decent map of Tunisia. Perhaps the biggest drawback to the book is its style of production. The original articles have simply been xeroxed (?) and reduced to fit. Thus pages 95-103 are unreadable without
a powerful magnifying glass and many photos and diagrams are illegible. The Landsat images on pages 18 and 19 could not be identified by Tunisian geographers as representations of their own country. The photos on pages 195-198 could have been omitted.

In summary — useful if you are going to Tunisia. Next time you are waylaid in the Casbah, take a closer look at those books under the jalabiya...

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BOOKS RECEIVED


The TMA Shallow-Water Spectrum Description and Applications, by Steven A. Hughes, 1984. Department of The Army, Waterways Experiment Station, Vicksburg, Mississippi, 39 pages.

NEW CITATIONS IN COASTAL TOPICS


