



## Book Reviews

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### **The Physiology of Reproduction 2nd Edition 1994**

Editors-in-Chief: Ernst Knobil, Jimmy D. Neill, New York: Raven Press, ISBN 0-7817-0086-8. Price \$454.

This is the second edition of a vast two-volume set of books with contributed chapters, which has been produced by a distinguished editorial board. The first volume runs to 1878 pages, and the second to 1372 pages. Volume I is divided into five sections, devoted to fertilization and embryogenesis, reproductive systems, and the male, hypothalamus-pituitary axis. Volume 2 has two sections, headed reproductive behavior and its control, and reproductive processes and their control, respectively.

A quick glance at the contributors is most reassuring, all are well known and respected workers in their field of research and teaching. It is also apparent from the writing that this work is directed chiefly to the postgraduate reader; there is a heavy emphasis on experimental results. There is nevertheless a generous amount of space devoted to text and diagrams which describe basic and well established facts about reproduction, and the confident undergraduate might well enhance notes using the book. Indeed, the quality of the artwork and of the half-tones throughout is on the

whole very pleasing. It is not possible to deal with this aspect comprehensively, but the excellent illustrations provided by Setchell, Maddocks and the late D.E. Brooks, in their chapter on the anatomy of the male reproductive tract are well worth a look, and representative of the series as a whole. It was a little disconcerting to discover that in Volume I some of the pages had been badly cut, and fragments of paper were found between the sheets (page 1771, in the Volume on this desk). While in a book of this size such problems are difficult to eliminate, it does not please the reader who will have spent a good sum on the set.

Clearly this is a reference work, and one whose price means it is most sensibly placed in an institutional library, or purchased as a reference text for the reproductive research laboratory. It occurs to this reviewer that a work of this nature might more sensibly be produced with a CD-ROM option in order to access information from the text. As books generally start to approach this size, it surely time for publishers to explore the opportunities offered through advanced information retrieval technology.

Ben Greenstein