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**Author name:** Bennett, J.

**Title:** Foraging behavior and ecology [book review].

**Article & version:** Post-print

**Original citation & hyperlink:**

Bennett, J. (2008) Foraging behavior and ecology [book review]. *Biological Conservation*, volume 141 (4): 1162-1163.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2008.02.006>

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**Available in the CURVE Research Collection: March 2012**

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David W. Stephens, Joel S. Brown and Ronald C. Ydenberg (Editors);  
Foraging Behavior and Ecology. University of Chicago Press, 2007. ISBN 0-226-  
77263-2 (hardback). 608 pages. Price £33.50.

This comprehensive text provides an important overview of the main advances that have occurred in our understanding of foraging, since the publication of Stephens and Krebs' seminal text, *Foraging Theory*, in 1986. Much has changed in this period and this book seeks to provide an insight into the broader range and greater complexity of approaches adopted since the much criticised focus on 'optimal' foraging characteristic of many earlier studies. In particular it focuses on areas such as animal cognition, predation risk, physiology and group dynamics (drawing on game theory) as research topics, which have recently provided considerable insight into the mechanisms driving foraging.

The book is organised into discrete sections. Within these, individual chapters are embellished with boxes from different subject matter experts, and provide deeper insight into the specific topics. Whilst several chapters review the accepted foundations of foraging very effectively the section on 'modern foraging theory' deals with some of the more recent and novel additions to the field, specifically; provisioning, foraging in the face of danger, and foraging in group situations. In this respect the book represents an important step forward in managing to combine, in one volume, not only most of the traditional elements of foraging research but also some new and interesting avenues of study. Although the majority of chapters provide comprehensive and stimulating reviews of the recent developments, the chapter on herbivory, by Jonathan Newman, deserves particular mention. As somebody with an interest in large herbivore foraging, I found his review thorough, well structured and, above all, thought provoking. His concluding section highlighting the need for an integrated approach to herbivore foraging that incorporates all the 'big questions' is timely and no doubt echoes the sentiments of many in the field.

Despite its considerable merits, a book with such an all-encompassing approach is bound to have its detractors. Only the most dedicated foraging theorists are likely to find interest in all that is presented here. Thus, despite the increasing prominence of foraging in ecological studies, this remains a relatively esoteric text, which might provide a broad introduction for postgraduate students or established researchers who wish to dip into a new field within the discipline. Furthermore, the geographical range of contributors is surprisingly narrow for a book of this scope (almost all are

drawn from North American universities). This is reflected in many of the case studies and examples used, and may limit its broader appeal.

Nevertheless, this book has much to recommend it and makes an important contribution to the field by comprehensively drawing together some the recent, multifarious developments in our understanding of foraging behaviour and ecology. As such it will provide a stimulating point of departure for researchers with widely differing interests within this expanding area.

Ref cited: David W. Stephens and John R. Krebs, (1986) Foraging Theory. Princeton University Press

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