



The American bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) poses a serious threat to our native amphibians

The introduction defines what an invasive species is and explains the ecology behind them using thought provoking statistics. When skimming through, you're struck by the generous number of colour photographs, providing a real feel for the species and making identification simpler.

The guide should be applauded for its ease of use. It is compact and concise, yet brimming with information. A key shows the species' distribution, habitat, population trend and whether it needs to be reported. The book also nicely summarises their natural history, including native range and how and when they were introduced to the UK.

It was particularly remarkable to see so many common garden plants with invasive tendencies and gives food for thought about whether we should be more considerate when choosing what we grow.

I was also pleased to see that the guide is up to speed with the latest technology, mentioning the use of apps to record wildlife. It should be noted, though, that this guide does not include any of Britain's invasive marine species.

Overall, it is an incredibly useful and genuinely enjoyable guide that will be of use to any wildlife lover, from the passionate amateur interested in conserving native species to the expert requiring a go-to guide when surveying.

DAN ROWSON AMRSB

MATHEMATICS FOR THE LIFE SCIENCES
Erin N Bodine, Suzanne Lenhart and Louis J Gross
Princeton University Press,
£59.00



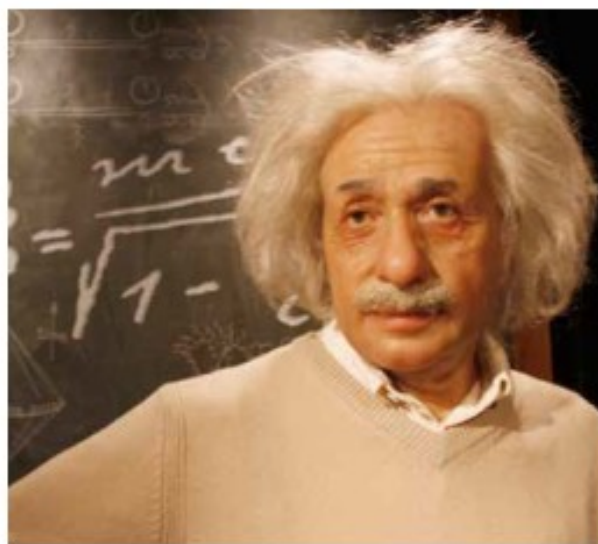
Textbooks are not always fun, but this one is. You are presented with a smooth and concise learning tool that

provides mathematics students and biologists with an appreciation of the diversity of mathematical approaches used in biology. Its uncomplicated approach and variety of useful mathematical techniques make it suitable for both academic and recreational learning.

The fourth generation programming language MATLAB is introduced through tutorials and walkthroughs, so the textbook becomes a useful tool for computing students too.

So often the exercises in mathematical textbooks are riddled with the same, step by step questions that do not engage the reader. The authors avoid this by making their later questions intuitive, providing a challenging workout for readers. The engaging, colourful and sharp style of *Mathematics for the Life Sciences* makes it a refreshing new entry into the world of bioscience textbooks.

GEORGE PRYN FORD



Albert Einstein's *Relativity* is included in Susan Wise Bauer's book

THE STORY OF WESTERN SCIENCE

Susan Wise Bauer
W W Norton and Company,
£16.99



Bauer's opening words are: "This is not a history of science". However, by page 2, she is already conceding this is only "a slightly different kind of history". She picks out great works that everybody knows, tells a tale or two, and then provides a link to an online version.

There are many other equally great works that she ignores – don't expect to find much medicine, philosophy, taxonomy, microbiology, medicine, pathology, technology or engineering, as she is fixated on the current vogue for genetics, physics and astronomy.

Sometimes she rights a wrong, reinstating William D Hamilton as the originator of the selfish gene concept. At other times she doesn't know enough – for example, she omits the many people who thought of natural selection prior to Charles Darwin, notably Patrick Matthew, Robert Chambers and the Reverend Baden Powell.

Bauer writes engagingly, and as a primer this could be a good read, but it lacks original scholarship.

BRIAN J FORD