interest to legal scholars and also to those who appreciate the importance of legal history and are engaged in a law practice dealing with these two seemingly disparate bodies of law.

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Structured around 10 chapters, with an introduction, tables, a bibliography, an appendix, and an index, the book’s author sets the stage with the following statements: “...the deep sea constitutes the most typical environment, and its inhabitants the typical life forms of planet earth... Increasingly, the deep sea is under threat from human activity. As a consequence there is now an urgent need to shift the focus of the marine conservation debate from the coastal and shallow waters to the high seas and the deep sea in particular ... moving the conservation debate to encompass conservation and sustainable management of vulnerable deep sea habitats is arguably the most important challenge of the next few decades” (Chapter 1, pp. 8–9).

In *International Law and the Genetic Resources of the Deep Sea*, David K. Leary does indeed transport the reader deep into the issue of the sustainability and management of deep-sea hydrothermal vent ecosystems – the genetic resources of the high seas that include biological communities and habitats of the deep sea, sediments, methane seeps, and trenches. In a very colloquial tone, Leary asks the reader: “why should we bother?” Acknowledging that the book is premised on Glowka’s “intriguing question,” Leary proceeds to develop the argument that the biological communities and microbial life associated with the hydrothermal vents are of general interest, not only for Europe and Japan, and should therefore be utilized fairly and equitably for all human activities. This begs the question of what legal and institutional regime should be created [the terms used by the author] for the genetic resources of the high seas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, considering that neither the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) nor the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity
The book is structured as follows: Chapter 1 deals with the international significance of deep-sea hydrothermal vents. Chapter 2 considers framework treaties and key concepts in international law. Chapter 3 covers regional and other environmental treaties. Chapter 4 deals with the continental shelf regime. Chapter 5 tackles the common heritage of humankind. Chapter 6 includes domestic legal regimes regulating activities at hydrothermal vent sites within national jurisdiction. Chapter 7 reviews the emerging deep-sea biotechnology industry. Chapter 8 evaluates the marine scientific research regime under the 1982 UNCLOS. Chapter 9 assesses the role of the International Seabed Authority; and Chapter 10 sketches elements of the future international legal regime, including recommendations by the author. The book also provides a table of treaties, agreements and declarations; a table of legislation (including Australia, Canada, European Union, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Portugal); a table of cases (listing three cases); and an extensive bibliography that does not include key references to Treves, Anderson, Roach, Soons, Gorina-Ysern, Wegelein (on the international legal regime governing Marine Scientific Research), and Armas-Pfirter or Scovazzi (on the international legal regime for the genetic resources of the high seas), among other leading writers in these fields. Appendix 1 provides a table of biotechnology and other companies involved in research and/or product development in relation to hydrothermal vents: potential applications of ongoing research and products development and currently on the market. Appendix 2 provides a list of patents granted in relation to biotechnology derived from hydrothermal vent microbes and inventions in the US (and one in the UK). Appendix 3 provides a list of seven Australia-New Zealand scientists engaged in hydrothermal vent research and interviewed by the author.

In Chapter 1, Leary outlines the potential economic importance that hydrothermal vent sites hold for tourism and the geothermal industry (through activities such as bioprospecting and deep-sea mining that he develops in later chapters). Most originally, Leary embraces Haldane’s philosophical question of the link between the origin of species and the discovery of hydrothermal vent communities, suggesting that the latter may hold significant answers for humanity. Though apparently descriptive in nature, and fairly well researched, Chapter 1 elevates threats to hydrothermal vent colonies to the level of “cosmic proportion” (p. 23), even though the author himself describes these threats as “vaguely understood and quantified” and admits the “lack of detailed information about these threats.” On the basis of this premise, all human intervention in these ecosystems is to proceed with care under the strict application of the precautionary principle. Chapter 1 serves to justify the need to withdraw from complex, unresolved and recurring international legal issues that