



Book review

Jędrzejewska, B.; Wójcik, J. M. (Eds.): Essays on Mammals of Białowieża Forest. Białowieża: Mammal Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences 2004. 214pp., many colour illustrations. € 6,-. ISBN 83-907521-1-5.

This is a very beautifully produced book. The colour illustrations are of high quality and they impress the reader. In 23 essays different Polish authors present their “favourite species or biological problem, to which they have devoted years of hard work”. After an introductory chapter the reader is introduced to the Białowieża primeval forest and to the biodiversity of the forest mammals living there. Clear maps, as well as informative graphs and photos, accompany these and the following chapters which deal with large ungulates, such as the European bison and red deer, and with mating systems in forest ungulates in general, as well as with scavenging on ungulate carcasses. The subsequent chapters present information on large and small species of carnivores, on bats,

rodents and on shrews. The natural economy of the mammalian energy budgets is treated in another chapter, as well as the genetic diversity of mammals and the morphometry of mammalian teeth. In a final chapter the history and structure of the Mammal Research Institute in Białowieża is presented and an appendix, giving scientific and English names of considered species, follows. The scientific profiles and addresses of the contributing authors conclude the volume.

A reader interested in the accomplishments of Polish mammalogy will obtain an overview of the remarkable research that has been done in the primeval forests of eastern central Europe, but the articles cannot be more than “appetizers” that make the reader long for more information that goes into greater depth.

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P. Langer, Giessen

Nowak, R.M: Walker’s Carnivores of the World. Baltimore, London: Johns Hopkins University Press 2005. Paperback, 313pp., 225 black and white illustrations. £ 15.50. ISBN 0-8018-8032-7.

Portions of this book have been adapted from “Walker’s Mammals of the World”, 6th edition, by Ronald M. Nowak (1999). The character and information of the texts describing species of eight families of Carnivora, not including the Pinnipedia, are identical to the above-mentioned widely distributed book.

An overview of 46 pages plus more than 20 pages of references, authored by D.W. Macdonald and R.W. Kays, gives an introduction to the carnivores. Modern accounts on taxonomy, diversity and zoogeography are supplied, as well as discussions on habitats, nutritional aspects and ecology. Social systems, behaviour,

as well as aspects of interactions with humans are dealt with in this introductory chapter.

The section of 205 page describing the species of Carnivora, is followed by presentations of the “World Distribution of Carnivores” in tabular form. An appendix presents a geological time scale and a comparison of metric with US dimensions, i.e., conversion tables and conversions scales for length, area, volume, capacity, mass and weight, as well as temperature. On 25 pages the literature cited in the section of the book that has been adapted from “Walker’s Mammals of the World”, is listed. An index of three pages concludes the book. The quality of the illustrations is not optimal and could be improved considerably!

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