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#### BOOK REVIEW

### Mammals of the Palaearctic Deserts

Mammals of the Palaearctic desert: status and trends in the Sahara-Gobian region. J. A. McNeely and V. M. Neronov, eds. The Russian Academy of Sciences, The Russian Committee for the UNESCO Programme on Man and Biosphere, Moscow, 1991, 297 pp. Available from: Russian MAB Committee, Fersman Str. 13, 117312 Moscow, Russia, Fax (7-095) 129-13-54. Price 20 USD.

The book is based on the papers presented at the symposium "The conservation of rare and endangered mammal species by the Biosphere Reserves network in the Sahara-Gobian desert region", organized in the frame of 5th International Theriological Congress, held in Rome, Italy, in August 1989. It contains 20 papers presented at the meeting, divided in two parts. First one covers the discussion of general problems (8 papers) and the second presents case studies and national reports. The development of protected areas and conservation of rare species of mammals in the Sahara-Gobian desert region is evaluated. Elements of the conservation strategy for particular species in this region are proposed, including genetical background for the preservation of biological diversity. Both wild and endangered breeds of domestic mammals are discussed, as well as the influence of climate on distribution and evolution of desert mammals, their ecophysiological characteristics and impact (especially of large herbivores) on the ecosystem. The second part contains some selected examples of data on the status and conservation of rare and endangered mammals in particular countries of the desert region.

Although not being complete, the book covers the main problems of conservation of rare and endangered species of mammals in the extensive belt of Palaearctic deserts and is a important source of information for students of mammals in this region. Both general ideas of the conservation strategy and relationships between mammals and their desert environment are of great importance for further studies and construction of action plans to conserve particular species. The role of Biosphere Reserve network already existing, but probably not sufficient to solve all problems of preservation the biodiversity of the region, is stressed in many papers. Some inconvenience to the reader is caused by abstracts which are lacking in many papers, or by placing tables and figures in the whole columns after the text, but not in appropriate places of the text.

The symposium and the publication of this book was a result of common efforts and financial support of the UNESCO Programme on "Man and Biosphere", the International Union of Biological Sciences, the World Conservation Union and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). It seems, that those great international organizations could offer a little more financial support to get higher typographical standard of this interesting and valuable book.

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