

## Beaver management in Europe and North America

Beaver protection, management, and utilization in Europe and North America. P. E. Busher and R. Dzięciolowski, eds. Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 1999, 182 pp., \$ 99.50 / £ 64 (hbk). Index ISBN 0-306-46121-8.

The book presents proceedings of the Symposium on Beaver Protection, Management and Utilization in Europe and North America, which was part of the Euro-American Mammal Congress held in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 19–24 July, 1998. It contains 17 papers on beaver (13 papers related to Europe and 4 to North America) with an index.

Given the general lack of recent beaver research, particularly on the rapidly developing populations of European beaver, there exists a very strong need to publish any new results, and so this volume could be very interesting and valuable. Very different topics of beaver biology and management are presented: current status of beaver populations in different European countries, protection efforts, and tools with special attention on reintroduction in Great Britain, The Netherlands, Austria, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia, ecology and management issues in Scandinavia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, potential beaver influence on ecosystems in Russia, beaver ecology and management in urban areas in Austria and Slovakia, population dynamics, management tools based on beaver behavior, genetics, utilization in Scandinavia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Russia, etc. There are several very good and interesting papers. For example B. A. Schulte and D. Müller-Schwarze present a paper on the long-term population dynamics and management of Canadian beaver. As the biology of both species of beavers is very similar, methods of their management based on knowledge of behavior could be easily transplanted to Europe. J. Sieber, F. Suchentrunk and G. B. Hartl describe biochemical-genetic discrimination of beaver species as an effective tool for species conservation. D. W. Macdonald and F. H. Tattersall describe a well-designed process of planned beaver reintroduction in Britain, which can be used as a good guide for the reintroduction of beavers in other countries, as well as other species.

However, the book rather does not satisfy our expectations. Apart from a very makeshift preface, which presents the topics in only 4 sentences, a general introduction is missing. The sequence of papers seems to be accidental or only to depend on geographical range of research (firstly Europe, secondly North America). Papers are not arranged in chapters to help the reader finding special topics and there is also no summary of results as a conclusion. The scientific quality of many papers is rather poor; they would not meet the quality requirements of a mainstream peer-reviewed journal. Some papers do not present results but merely designs for future research or expected results (ie "Ecological restoration by harnessing the work of beavers" by Yu. A. Gorshkov and others). There are even papers without references. The wide differences in quality, language and structure suggest that guidelines given to authors were too superficial and the review of first versions of the publications was too rough. Because the papers vary greatly in subject, purpose, style and format it would have been valuable to divide them leading into articles and notes.

Summing up, the title and preface of the book promise too much, however, this book fills certain gaps in our knowledge on beavers. Papers already published in different journals were concerned with beaver protection and population dynamics in specific countries. This book reflects changes in research subject and growing interest in those beaver management methods, which take beaver influence on ecosystems, as well on human economy into consideration. As the population and distribution of beavers expand, this subject will continue to generate much research interest.

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