

of some temperate species than we do of the ecology of many tropical deer species. There is extensive treatment of the lineages for each group, including a chapter devoted to *Megalocerus* and other recent giant deer species, most of which is devoted to linking allometry, habitat, and ecology. The concluding chapters cover each deer group and return to Geist's continuing theme of continua that are shaped by selection forces. His conclusions that humans have shaped much of deer biology is certainly borne out in the European species, and I agree with the high value he places on species' responses to predators.

The strengths of the book lie in Geist's ability to draw together a diverse literature and to place behaviors and ecology observed for one species in the context of other deer species. The bibliography is extensive, and Geist had access to many texts that I was not aware of, citing extensively from German and Russian texts. I enjoyed the emphasis on behavior and the cross-species comparisons of flight and mating behavior. I was surprised by the scarcity of behavioral observations on many species outside captive situations. One strength of the book is certainly the illustrations, most of them drawings by Geist, which capture the subtle differences between species. The appendix tables of physical and physiological measurements will be a valuable reference for all deer biologists. There is an index, but it is not extensive, as topics are brought up repeatedly throughout the book, but only the main discussion appears to be referenced in the index.

I did not agree with the in-depth comparisons between subspecies. The premise is that differences in coat color and marking and in antler configuration reflect ecological/genetic selection at work on these populations, while size differences are phenotypic and reflect site quality. I agree with the size differences, but await more support for the coat colors. I realize that subspecies comparisons are at the heart of Geist's dispersal hypothesis, but for me the clearer chapters are the ones in which subspecies issues do not cloud the picture, such as those on white-tailed/mule deer and three-pronged old-world deer. I wish there were range maps that went with each discussion, as my sense of geography is not what it should be. I found a minimum of mistakes, just the usual pesky decimal points. It seems each chapter was written as an independent unit, as similar discussions occur in each chapter. For example, a discussion of species differences in response to being chased by dogs or mounted hunters occurs in each group chapter. Geist might have shortened the book considerably by referring to previous discussions.

More ideas are expressed in each chapter of this book than are usually seen in an entire Ph.D. dissertation. The speculative ideas, which usually come at the end of paragraphs or sections, are fascinating, but certainly debatable. Geist's writing style is such that speculative ideas or hypotheses are sometimes presented with stronger language than the data would bear. The lack of qualifiers was sometimes disconcerting, but, when I could lean back and enjoy the ride, it made for fascinating reading.

I recommend this book to laypersons who are curious about the animals they have been following. No other book compares the well-known species, which are covered extensively within the hunting literature, with the less-known species that make up the bulk of the world's deer. This is not a management book that provides prescriptions for each species. However, I do recommend this book to professionals, as it provides a unifying theme for deer species and enough detail to start testing hypotheses. The cross-species comparisons are thoughtful and point to the lack of basic information on tropical species, and the behavior of common species in natural settings. I am not sure what percentage of the hypotheses that Geist presents will prove true, but they will provide the gist for many dissertations. This book will be mined for a generation, while we wait for the next holistic deer biologist to appear.

REFERENCE

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POLAR DANCE: BORN OF THE NORTH WIND. Photographs by THOMAS D. MANGELSEN, with text by FRED BRUEMMER. Omaha, Nebraska: Images of Nature, 1997. ISBN 1-890310-03-4. 264 p., 1 coloured map, 280 colour illus., line drawings, index. Hardbound. US \$65.00.

This book is a large, attractive volume, replete with hundreds of fine colour photographs, well produced on good-quality paper. The large format announces to the reader that this could well be a further addition to the "coffee table genre" of big publications with minimal text and pretty images. However, while the authors would be unwise to deny a certain kinship with that much-disparaged genre, there is much to distinguish and recommend this production.

This is not an academic text, and it would be invidious to judge it by such exacting criteria. That said, it is important to recognize what this book is, rather than what it is not. It is overwhelmingly a popular book intended to serve a wide audience of nonspecialists who seek an introduction to the polar bear, its habits, and its environment.

The excellent photography of Thomas D. Mangelsen is accompanied by a “story” courtesy of Fred Bruemmer, and there is a certain degree of correlation between images and text. Although the dust jacket announces the text to be a “story,” Bruemmer, an Arctic veteran of some 35 years, offers a species of fiction grounded in facts and details, a “story based on...many years of observation [and] scientific knowledge” (p. 13).

Bruemmer’s omniscient narrative is actually three narratives that complement one another, producing an integrated overview. One of the story’s strands focuses on the peregrinations of a polar bear mother and her two cubs, while another follows the life of a mature adult male and the arctic fox who accompanies him. These elements are embedded in a further, framing narrative that concentrates on Arctic history and natural history, as well as providing geological, anthropological, archaeological, and ethnographic background material. During the course of his fiction, Bruemmer takes the reader through a full-year cycle in the lives of his subjects. This scheme provides Mangelsen ample opportunity for some visually stunning portrayals of the seasons, while the reader learns the yearly patterns of polar bear behaviour.

The book is easygoing (and certainly easy on the eye), informative, and accessible, with many passages and images relating to other Arctic animals. Bruemmer’s effortless style is clearly the product of an intimate knowledge not only of the polar bear, but also of the Arctic generally. Where he really scores highly is in his ability to underpin his fiction with accurate detail. For example, he uses exact Inuit terms, subtly and succinctly revealing their meanings to the reader without the need for stodgy explanations, or recourse to endless glossaries.

The story is a fitting accompaniment to the striking visuals. Images range from approximately 35 mm contact print size to double-page spreads of about 18 x 56 cm. The photographs themselves represent a mere fraction of the 85 000 images of polar bears and other Arctic wildlife from which they were chosen. These range in scale from vast Arctic land- and seascapes to detailed close-ups of flora and fauna. Their subject matter is similarly broad, and pictures of Canada geese, arctic foxes, snowy owls, willow ptarmigan, snow geese, and arctic ground squirrels (to name but a few) are found among the expected pictures of polar bears. In addition, the text provides a handy index to the photographs, enabling beginners to identify the names of animals and birds.

Not surprisingly, in a book of this kind, Tom Mangelsen’s imagery largely eschews depictions of nature “red in tooth and claw.” Frank Craighead’s Foreword is right to stress the “mood” rather than the realism of the work: “You can be sure that Tom’s bear images and other arctic photographs...accurately portray the mood of the polar bear and its world” (p. 11). Indeed, there is no disputing that Mangelsen’s images (as one would expect from a BBC “Wildlife Photographer of the Year”) are technically excellent, unusual, and perhaps better seen than described.

Polar Dance is a monumental work and an impressive achievement. That it is neither a serious academic work nor a work of science makes it something of a breath of fresh air. For the novice general reader, it provides a rich, attractive introduction to the polar bear and its Arctic environment. Even the hardboiled polar specialist would have to be very hardboiled not to enjoy the images in this book. It is a text to be dipped into, pored over, and revisited many times.

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THE ALASKA-KLONDIKE DIARY OF ELIZABETH ROBINS, 1900. Edited by VICTORIA JOAN MOESSNER and JOANNE E. GATES. Fairbanks, Alaska: University of Alaska Press, 1999. ISBN 0912006994. xviii + 390 pages, illus., maps, bibl., index. Softbound. US\$22.95.

The publication of diaries of the Klondike and Alaska gold rushes has become an almost monthly event during the centenary celebrations over the last few years. All of these diaries contribute to our understanding of the people who participated in the gold rushes and their daily lives. A few, however, stand out from the rest for their erudition or acuteness of observation. These, for example E. Tappan Adney’s *The Klondike Stampede* and Elizabeth Robins’ recently released *Alaska-Klondike Diary*, provide sharper focus and more detailed insights into the events, places, and people of the period.

Elizabeth Robins, an American-born actress and writer for both stage and popular, but “correct,” journals, was an unusual visitor to the North. Her theatrical career was centred in Europe, but she made frequent visits back to proper circles on the eastern seaboard. Widowed at 25, she made her career her life. The only exception was her especial fondness for a brother, Raymond, who had headed off to Alaska during the gold rush and become embroiled in the controversial and often violent municipal politics of Nome. In the spring of 1900, Elizabeth went to visit her brother and see the North.

Her diary of this trip, with its lengthy, detailed entries and illustrations selected from her excellent photos, provides colourful insights into many aspects of northern life. Three interesting elements for this reviewer were her observations on women’s lives, her careful record of interviews she had with prominent Northerners, and evidence of a more complicated view of the frontier and American life.

Elizabeth Robins met many women during her trip. These ranged from social equals whose husbands ran mining companies, to upright women whose fortunes had