

BOOK REVIEW

**A monograph of the wolf**

Wilk [The wolf]. H. Okarma. Białowieża, 1992. 168 pp. ISBN 83-900635-0-6. [Available from the author, c/o Mammal Res. Inst. PAS, 17-230 Białowieża, Poland. Price 4.0 USD, including postage].

If we do not take into consideration two Russian monographs of the wolf, which are very difficult to find and in which the subject is treated selectively, Henryk Okarma's book is the first monograph of this species in Europe. It describes comprehensively the most important facts of the wolf's life history. The book is based, as far as it was possible, on Polish and European data and supplemented by data from the richest American literature.

The book consists of nine chapters, among which five deal with distribution and numbers, morphology, biology and ecology of the wolf. In a chapter on the role of the wolf in the ecosystem, the author validates problems of the wolf's presence in various European habitats. An important part of the book is a chapter on wolf management, in which a modern view, contrary to the prevailing one that as many wolves as possible should be shot, is presented. An interesting contribution to the general knowledge of the biology of the species is a chapter on techniques used to hunt wolves. The attention of many readers will also be captured by a chapter on the public perception of the wolf: the wolf as a motivator of human creativeness, myths and legends, aggression towards man, etc.

Subtitled "a natural-hunting monograph" this is not a purely scientific book. It is first of all a popular monograph, written with great skill, professionalism, and dedication which is addressed to a wide range of readers: hunters, foresters, biologists, and nature enthusiasts. It fills up a gap in nature literature.

It is a pity that this book is written in Polish, only with the last chapter in English presenting concise information on the status and biology of the wolf in Poland. Such a valuable popular science book should have an English or German edition.

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