

BOOK REVIEW: The Red Book — Wildlife in Danger

Author: Loew, F. M.

Source: Journal of Wildlife Diseases, 6(3) : 184-186

Published By: Wildlife Disease Association

URL: <https://doi.org/10.7589/0090-3558-6.3.184>

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BOOK REVIEW

The Red Book — Wildlife in Danger. by J. Fisher, N. Simon, J. Vincent and others. Collins, London. 1969. \$17.50. 362 pp. and index.

Occasionally a book is published which fills a need for both laymen and scientists without offending either group. This is such a book. Profusely illustrated in black and white and in color, it "contains information as objective as a global consensus of biological expertise can make it". In it are described and discussed all of the presently endangered species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, and plants as compiled by the Survival Service Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. The Commission exists to study and cure the situation characterized by the following: in the year 1600, "there were approximately 4,226 living species of birds. Since then ninety-four have doubtless become extinct; and at least 120 of them are presently in some (or great) danger of extinction." The suspected or known causes of the decline in numbers are given, and several species face severe threats from disease or disease-related causes (Table 1).

TABLE 1. *Animal Species Endangered by Disease or Medical Problems*

ANIMAL	LOCALE	COMMENT
<i>Primates:</i>		
Woolly spider monkey	Brazil	One of the few U.S. zoo specimens died "through the effects of internal parasites".
Goeldi's tamarin	Bolivia; Peru; Brazil	Demand by pet trade is reducing its numbers; high mortality among newly-exported specimens.
Orangutan	Sumatra; Borneo	Popular as pets; young specimens are "especially prone to human infections".
Gorilla	Equatorial west and west- central Africa	Increasing demand by "medical research and the pharmaceutical industry"; susceptible to "a wide variety of diseases . . . : virus diseases, bacterial infections, and various internal parasites may be responsible for the majority of gorilla deaths."
<i>Rodentia:</i>		
Kaibab squirrel	Arizona	"Other contributory causes of decline include diseases . . ."
Utah prairie dog	Utah	sylvatic plague
<i>Cetacea:</i>		
Whales		used for animal food
<i>Carnivora:</i>		
Mexican grizzly bear	Mexico	poisoned by sodium fluoracetate

Polar bear	Arctic	<i>Trichinella</i> infection
Black-footed ferret	North American prairies	poisoned by sodium fluoracetate intended for prairie dogs
<i>Artiodactyla:</i>		
Western giant eland	Africa, especially West Africa	rinderpest
Wild Asiatic buffalo	India; Nepal	rinderpest from domestic cattle
Kouprey	Cambodia; Vietnam	low reproductive rate, "possibly arising from lack of calcium and phosphorus in the area in which it lives".
Wood bison	Northwest Territories; Alberta	tuberculosis (causes annual losses of 4-6% of the population), brucellosis, anthrax.
Hunter's hartebeest	Kenya	nutritional muscular dystrophy
Swayne's hartebeest	Ethiopia; Somali Republic	rinderpest
<i>Accipitridae:</i>		
African lammergeyer	Africa	poisons intended for jackals
Monkey-eating eagle	Phillipines	zoo acquisitions
<i>Muscicapidae:</i>		
Hawaiian thrushes	Hawaii	"it was suggested that introduced poultry diseases may have affected them"
<i>Drepanididae:</i>		
Hawaiian honeycreepers	Hawaii	"disease carried by introduced birds and mosquitoes"

Since factors other than disease, such as urbanization, changes in agricultural practices, damming and flooding, and indiscriminate pesticide usage are usually considered to be more important causes of potential extinction, it is surprising that disease now threatens more than a dozen species of rare mammals and birds.

Zoologists, biologists, veterinarians and many others are in positions to take action in some cases, and the following areas of activity appear most worthy of attention:

1) While disease prevention and control require little further explanation, it is of interest to note the diverse nature of the diseases which now threaten species previously reduced in numbers by other causes (Table 1).

2) Attitudes of zoo committees and directors can be influenced so that endangered species are not acquired.

3) Commercial animal food processors should be convinced that whales, for example, are becoming threatened by their capture and use in animal food.

4) Acquisition for research purposes of endangered species is to be deplored, unless serious captive breeding programs are initiated.

5) Development of biologicals and drugs, especially those used for restraint, should be encouraged. "During the last few years there have been some notable advances in the types of drugs and the techniques used for the immobilization of wild animals. The importance of these developments to the future of the black rhino and several other endangered species can scarcely be overstated. . . ."

The use of biologicals has had profound effects as well: ". . . the elands, and several other susceptible indigenous mammals, have benefited from the work of various territorial veterinary services in immunizing cattle against rinderpest. . . ."

6) The importation of endangered species for the pet trade should be discouraged.

These areas are subject to influence by wildlife disease workers. It would seem vital that all efforts be taken to assist as much as possible in efforts to preserve endangered species. It is my opinion that this book is most important for workers in the field of wildlife diseases.

F. M. Loew
Western College of
Veterinary Medicine
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

WDA COMMITTEES

For the information of members, the following standing and ad hoc committees have been established for WDA during 1970-1971:

I. Standing

- A. Wildlife Disease Association
Awards (years to serve)
R. M. Robinson (1) (Chairman)
C. Herman (2)
A. B. Cowan (3)
- B. WDA Nominating Committee
L. H. Karstad (1) (Chairman)
C. Herman (2)
J. Riley (3)
- C. WDA Meeting, Time and Place
J. Debbie (1) (Chairman)
M. Rosen (2)
R. Cook (3)

II. Ad Hoc

- A. Wildlife Mortality Surveillance
M. Friend (Co-chairman)
W. Winkler (Co-chairman)
L. Locke
E. Broughton
T. Kistner
- B. European Secretary
C. Herman (Chairman)
L. Page
G. Hoffman
- C. WDA Meeting, 1971,
Fort Collins, Colo.
Local Arrangements, R. Davis
Program, to be selected

D. O. TRAINER
President, WDA