

Ungulate Management in Europe: Problems and Practices

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BOOK REVIEW

Ungulate Management in Europe: Problems and Practices

Edited by: Rory Putman, Marco Apollonio & Reidar Andersen
Publisher: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2011, 410 pp.
ISBN: 978-0-521-76059-1 (hardback).

Managing ungulates is never just a biological challenge. The diverse nature of legislative systems and social attitudes towards the management of ungulates, as well as ecogeographical differences, lead to a complex mosaic of management strategies across Europe. The authors of this book cover both the biological and social components of this topic, and they synthesise the complex information in a well-informed and science-based management.

This book is a companion volume to the earlier extensive publication "European Ungulates and Their Management in the 21st Century" by Apollonio et al. (2010). Initiated at a meeting in Italy in 2004, the first book already covered the status and distribution of ungulate species for 28 European countries. In this second volume, 26 experts created a synthesis of the legislative foundations, challenges and possible management options that shape the current ungulate management in Europe.

The book is structured into two main parts. It begins with an overview covering the status of ungulates, the different value systems and legislative rules connected to ungulate management. The second section deals with recent challenges and explores different management options. In contrast to the first book, each chapter combines information about the different countries. Additionally, by presenting the data in large tables it is possible to easily compare the different countries.

The second chapter uses five case studies to illustrate the distribution and genetic status of ungulates in Europe.

The third chapter deals with the different legislative systems concerning ungulate management. The authors don't claim to offer exhaustive information on this subject due to strong differences between, and often even within, countries.

The fourth chapter discusses the possible biological effects of hunting seasons and looks specifically at the possible effects of hunting during the rut, late pregnancy and hunting of females with dependant young. By raising ecological and ethical questions, this chapter stimulates a critical look at the reader's own hunting systems.

The fifth chapter provides a summary of the different census methods and their applications within Europe. The authors discuss the ongoing debate whether to count animals or to measure the impact on habitat and body condition.

The sixth chapter reviews the impact of ungulates on vegetation, including forestry, agriculture and conservation areas.

Two chapters and an extra information box deal with the role of diseases in ungulate populations. The increasing problem of traffic collisions and especially their mitigation is covered in detail and proves to be a valuable reference.

The ninth chapter discusses the highly topical role of large herbivores as environmental engineers.

The relationship of large carnivores and ungulates is increasingly more important for many European countries, particularly as the wolf expands its range. This topic is discussed in chapter 10 and is extended by an additional information box about the influence of foxes.

The book closes by exploring the possible effects of climate change and provides an outlook of the future of ungulate management in Europe. Management of ungulates is mainly focused on hunting in this book. Given the importance of hunting as a management tool in Europe, this may be justified but alternative methods like managing habitat could have been discussed in more detail.

The book highlights the underlying reasons that shape the different management policies in Europe and leads to a better understanding of the problems policy makers, wildlife managers, hunters and scientists face while managing ungulates in Europe.

This volume is a valuable work of reference and will improve the development of a more coordinated science-based management in Europe.

Reference: Apollonio, M., Andersen, R. & Putman, R. 2010: European Ungulates and Their Management in the 21st Century. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 618 pp.

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