BOOK REVIEW


This two-issue volume in the World Organisation for Animal Health’s (Office International Des Epizooties [OIE]) Scientific and Technical Review series is the OIE’s first compilation of information on infectious diseases of wildlife since 1988. As OIE Director General Bernard Vallat states in his preface, since 1988 “... impressive progress has been made in the fields of diagnosis and management of infectious diseases, detection of new or emerging diseases, and recognition of the epidemiological link between wildlife and many of these diseases.” R.G. Bengis coordinated the compilation of this volume, and is to be commended for envisioning and soliciting a set of papers covering several of the most pertinent topics in wildlife health. The papers are global in their authorship and in their perspective, and it is for this reason that this OIE publication is one of the more important recent contributions to the body of literature on wildlife health.

Each issue is comprised of 11 papers authored by some of the world’s foremost authorities in their subjects. Papers are presented in full in English, and are followed by summaries in French and Spanish. The issues are sturdily bound and are easy on the eye with their relatively large-font text and two-column format. A Table of Contents in each issue for the entire volume helps orient the reader, but the lack of an index for the 402-page volume unfortunately makes it difficult to extract specific information. Occasional formatting errors and difficult-to-read graphics are distracting but do not detract from content.

Volume 21(1) orients the reader to several of the major and current concepts in wildlife health, with papers on such topics as valuation of wildlife, disease at the wildlife and livestock interface, geographical information systems (GIS) as a tool in wildlife epidemiology, international regulation of trade in wildlife products, emerging infectious diseases in wildlife, and health risk assessment of wild animal translocation. The breadth of topics covered in this issue makes it one of the best places for one-stop shopping for current information and opinion on these issues. Several of the papers are some of the best, concise reviews and compilations of all available information I have seen. Especially good are “Infectious animal diseases: the wildlife/livestock interface” (R. G. Bengis et al. Pp. 53–65), “Geographical information systems as a tool in epidemiological assessment and wildlife disease management” (D. U. Pfeiffer and M. Hugh-Jones, Pp. 91–102), “Bioweapons, bioterrorism and biodiversity: potential impacts of biological weapons attacks on agricultural and biological diversity” (J. P. Dudley and M. H. Woodford, Pp. 125–137), and “Emerging infectious diseases in wildlife” (E. S. Williams et al. Pp. 139–157). These papers are extremely well referenced, up-to-date, and succinct. “International regulation of wildlife trade: relevant legislation and organisations” (M. E. Cooper and A. M. Rosser, Pp. 103–123) is also very thorough, and as one of only a handful of papers that attempt to summarize the information on the topic, will serve as an excellent reference for readers. “Disease management strategies for wildlife” (G. Wobeser, Pp. 159–178) is essentially an encapsulation of his book of similar title, with updated references—almost a “pocket” version that serves as a great quick reference or review of this material.

Unfortunately, some papers in Volume 21(1) are disappointingly inconsistent in their factuality and referencing. For example, “The value of wildlife” (Ph. Chardonnet et al., Pp. 15–51) includes factual statements not backed up with references, as well as several gross generalizations that made this reader feel uneasy in accepting other, less grandiose statements. For example, subsistence hunters in Africa are described as “…secret societies, [as] they use their own language, wear their particular clothing with talismans and amulets, play their own music and respect their own rites in all circumstances of life.” (p. 24). This statement seems curiously 19th century in its tone. Another example, regarding the status of hunting in Western Europe, “The urban anti-hunting sentiments of ecologists helped to sever the rural roots of the new-city dwellers.” (p. 26) is quite likely just an error in translation of the term “ecologist.” This is unfortunate, as the topic of the paper is exceptionally important in this day and age as wildlife veterinarians, managers, and conservationists are increasingly required to justify costly programs or processes. Another paper in this issue, titled “Diagnostic pathology of selected diseases in wildlife” (J. E. Cooper, Pp. 77–89) is somewhat patchy in its content: for example, a great deal of information on the histopathology of rabies is presented, whereas the section on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies contains virtually no information on histopathology of this group of diseases. Also, the paper does not cite several key papers, and contains numerous space-occupying color photographs that are of minimal value to the reader.

Volume 21(2) focuses on specific diseases of various taxa, and includes reviews of brucellosis, tuberculosis, anthrax, sarcoptic mange, and rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus in wildlife worldwide; classical swine fever in wild boar in Europe; chronic wasting disease in North American cervids; infectious keratoconjunctivitis in ibex and chamois; and general reviews of the diseases of farmed wildlife (deer, bison, crocodiles, and ostriches). This is an excellent collection of papers, which are for the most part clear, concise, and well-referenced summaries of all pertinent available information. The papers on brucellosis, classical swine fever, chronic wasting disease, tuberculo sis, rabbit hemorrhagic viral disease, and sarcoptic mange are especially well-written and organized, and clearly exhaustively referenced. “Diseases of farmed crocodiles and ostriches” (F. W. Huchzermeyer, Pp. 265–276), although