

Field Manual of Wildlife Diseases in the Southeastern United States, Third Edition

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Source: Journal of Wildlife Diseases, 45(3) : 886-892

Published By: Wildlife Disease Association

URL: <https://doi.org/10.7589/0090-3558-45.3.886>

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BOOK REVIEWS

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The following reviews express the opinions of the individual author(s) regarding the value of the book's content for Journal of Wildlife Diseases readers. The reviews are subjective assessments and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors, nor do they establish any official policy of the Wildlife Disease Association.

Field Manual of Wildlife Diseases in the Southeastern United States, Third Edition. By William R. Davidson, Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study, College of Veterinary Medicine, The University of Georgia, 589 D.W. Brooks Drive, Athens, Georgia 30602, USA. 2006. 448 pp. US \$25.00 (vinyl cover).

Review by David A. Jessup

This third edition of the venerable and well used Field Manuals coming out of the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS) is just what any user of the previous edition would want. More of the same. It is still pocket-book size and still plastic covered to make it robust and relatively resistant to dirt, weather, and goo. The contents are quite similar to previous editions with sections entitled Use of the Manual, Field Investigations, and Toxicoses followed by chapters on 25 major wildlife species and their most significant diseases. The third edition is 448 pages, compared with 309 pages for the first and 417 pages for the second edition, respectively, and it contains a good deal of new information and several new sections. The new sections, which the reader will find at the end of the manual are as follows: Additional Disease Issues of Concern to the Southeast, Disease Issues in Wild Species Outside the Southeast, Foreign Animal Diseases, and Practices that Alter Disease Risks for Wildlife.

These new sections are quite useful, because they are concise and cite specific examples of particular concerns or when and where actual problems have arisen. This is the kind of information that is often missing from text books but which is so useful in the field and also for briefing decision makers. For example, the section on disease issues outside the Southeast has outstanding summary descriptions of

chronic wasting disease, tuberculosis, and cervid adenovirus among other diseases. These descriptions follow a format used throughout the manual: causative agent, clinical signs, lesions, hosts, diagnosis, transmission, wildlife management significance, public health implications—these being the basic topics most people really need to know about. The section on foreign animal diseases has a useful table with each disease named, along with cause, transmission, impact, and signs/lesions followed by wildlife information. The section entitled Practices that Alter Disease Risks for Wildlife briefly covers animal translocation, captive propagation, supplemental feeding and baiting, and high-fence wildlife enclosures. Specific examples of impacts on wildlife health are provided for each of these very important and controversial issues.

The species and disease sections cover white-tailed deer, elk, wild swine, black bear, raccoon, striped skunk, red fox, gray fox, coyote, bobcat, opossum, mink, river otter, muskrat, beaver, cottontail rabbit, gray squirrel, woodchuck, armadillo, wild turkey, ruffed grouse, bobwhite, mourning dove, waterfowl, and nongame birds. The format is as described above, beginning with causative agents and providing very clear pictures of the disease lesions and/or parasites, and often life cycle drawings. Much of this is taken from the first and second editions, although some new material has been added. The sections on white-tailed deer, wild swine, Wild Turkey, and raccoon stand out as almost definitive works in the manual style. Some of the pictures are so characteristic that they show up time and again on examinations (hint to students) and immediately pop into your mind when a particular disease or condition is discussed.

This is not a text book. It does not have complete or extensive literature citations, and usually includes just those best known to the

author(s). It does not cover many subtleties and can seem a bit simplified, but the editor makes it clear on page one, “the reader is forewarned that “picture book” diagnostics do not work.” The manual is primarily designed for field biologists but is extremely useful for wildlife health professionals and veterinarians, and I suspect most have just about memorized the earlier editions of this book. I doubt many serious wildlife-disease workers do not own or will not be buying this third edition. One problem I have found over the years is that my copies of the first two editions keep sprouting legs and disappearing off my bookshelf. You know it’s a good manual when it keeps wandering off in someone else’s book bag.

Dr. William R. Davidson (“Randy” to his friends) has more than 30 years of laboratory

and field experience, working on all sorts of wildlife diseases, and although he has already contributed greatly, this book is one of his great gifts to the field. In addition to Randy, the contributing authors include Drs. John Fischer, Susan Little, Mitchell Lockhart, Page Luttrell, Daniel Mead, Victor Nettles, Charlotte Quist, Kirk Smith, David Stallknecht, and Michael Yabsley, SCWDS stalwarts one and all. In case it isn’t already clear, the reviewer highly recommends this manual.

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