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Brief Reviews

MARINE MAMMALS: EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY. Second edition. Annalisa Berta, James L. Sumich, and Kit M. Kovacs. 2006. Burlington, MA, and San Diego: Academic Press. x + 547 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-12-088552-2. £43.99; \$US69.95; EUR 63.95.

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Marine mammals: evolutionary biology was originally published in 1999, but a number of significant changes and improvements have been made to this second edition. There is a new chapter on energetics, improved colour art and distribution maps, and the sections dealing with ecology and behaviour have been expanded. Most chapters have been updated to include the latest scientific advances in the field.

Like the first edition, the second is aimed at two audiences. It is intended as a text book for senior undergraduates or graduates studying the biology of marine mammals, but the authors also wrote it as a source book for anyone working in the field of marine biology, not just biologists and zoologists, but those engaged in marine mammal management issues, and legal or policy development.

The book begins with a basic brief introduction that defines terms and outlines the development of marine mammal science. The rest of the book is divided into two sections: Part I relates to evolutionary history, while Part II deals with evolutionary biology, ecology, and behaviour.

Part I includes an overview of mammalian systematics and classification, then the three subsequent chapters relate these issues to pinnipeds, cetaceans, and sirenians, sea otters, and polar bears. The section concludes with a discussion of evolutionary biogeography.

Part II is longer, and begins with a review of integumentary and sensory systems, an analysis of the musculoskeletal system and locomotion, and a concise guide to respiration and diving physiology. The new chapter on energetics is an important addition, because of recent developments in the study of marine mammalian metabolism. Part II continues with a chapter on echolocation and communication, one on diet and feeding patterns, one on reproduction, and one on population structure and dynamics. The book concludes with a discussion about the exploitation and conservation of marine mammals, and there is a very useful appendix on classical systematics.

In some ways, the book is misnamed, because only the first part deals with the evolution of marine mammals in detail, and the remainder of the book is a good, solid guide to their complex biology. That said, *Marine mammals: evolutionary biology* will certainly be popular with students, because it is clearly and concisely written, and intelligently illustrated.

NEWS MEDIA AND POWER IN RUSSIA. Olessia Koltsova. 2006. London and New York: Routledge (BASEES/Routledge series on Russian and East European studies 24). xv + 271p, hard cover. ISBN 0-415-34515-4. £65.00.

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This welcome book on the formation of the new media climate in Russia, at a time of national experimentation in an unfamiliar, and crude, capitalist environment, is of more relevance to readers of *Polar Record* than might appear obvious at first sight. The book examines the different actors who 'make' the news in the country and considers the roles of the various agents of power involved in the process. It provides great detail on the actual daily practices, many of them unsavoury, of news production, and confirms, if anyone were in any doubt on the matter, that the motivations of the interested and powerful parties engaged are an intrinsic part of the process.

The author takes examples from many parts of the country and not a few of these are from Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. Here a familiar theme in Russian history becomes evident: the farther from Moscow (or in Tsarist times, St Petersburg) one was, the more local circumstances, in particular local power structures, came into play. For example, in Syktyvkar, Komi Republic, in 1996, there was a power struggle between local moguls concerning the issue of licensing. One company was shut down because it did not have a specific broadcasting licence even though it had a media producing licence, while at the same time two other channels, under different control, continued on air without such licence.

The position of journalists is also commented upon and especially the exercise of violence against them by state and non-state agencies. Here, the richer the area, the more dangerous it seems to be for journalists. The author comments that it is 'unlucky' for the Krasnoyarsk area

that it has such wealth, when one might expect that the exact opposite sentiment would be expressed. She also provides insights concerning the sources of information available in Russia, commenting on the catastrophe of the submarine *Kursk*, lost in the Barents Sea in 2000. The poor crisis management demonstrated on that occasion contradicted the impression that was beginning to be held

that the Russian government had a consistent information policy.

The book is very well written, easy to read, and provides an excellent introduction to the topic. One must admire the thoroughness, and, indeed, also the courage, with which the author has pursued her research. The book is a worthy addition to an important series.