

and the culled game meat was contributed to the social food-supply or else was sold to Zapovednik staff. The elimination of crows, and cormorants as fish-eating birds took place Russia-wide. Bears, marten, gulls, skuas, crows, hawks and eagles got killed *en masse*. Extensive campaigns against wolves by poison and air were carried out for almost a century shaping the Russian culture against predators to this very day.

The text reads like a crime story. As felt in many other places in the world, the Stalinist revolution further led to more and major changes. Namely, a shift from nature protection to exploitation in the interest of the socialist construction. Protecting nature for the sake of nature was not *en vogue* anymore. Further, "Bourgeois" professors who comprised a large proportion of the conservation's cadre in the Soviet state in the 1930s were eliminated, and many members of the Academy of Science got arrested. From then on, Zapovedniks were explored for minerals, coal and oil deposits, timber resources and fur bearing resources, culminating in slogans like "We must take the Urals apart". The fetish of inviolability as a bourgeois theory got sacrificed. Protection was now defined as exploitation. Under comrade Stalin, Zapovedniks turned into multi-purpose economic enterprises. It led to the view that planned exploitation of Natural Resources would be the main pre-condition of Nature Protection.

From the 1960s onwards the Zapovednik system experienced a modernization. A. G. Bannikov and G. P. Dementev started to participate in the IUCN. Russian-Japanese international migratory bird conventions got signed. In 1970-71 the UNESCO biosphere reserves "Man and Biosphere" were established. In 1972 a U.S.-Russian agreement on protecting the natural environment got accomplished, and the USSR Red Data book came into place.

As early as 1975 multidisciplinary monitoring was demanded in Russia, a theme that is very relevant for today even, and not achieved by most countries yet. When cheap fuel got provided for that purpose to the Zapovedniks by the state, they got quickly swamped with motorboats, snow tractors and motorcycles. Helicopters can be added to the list as well since flying was very common by then. The author explains that caterpillars tracked and wheeled cross-country, and vehi-

cles ploughed up the tundra on Vrangeli and Taymyr.

In the 1990s, the U.S. American Soros and MacArthur Foundations with their foreign funds gained considerable influence over Russia's nature; WWF, Evraziya, the Japanese Society for the Protection of Birds, the Global Ecological Facility, and the International Bank for Reconstruction & Development were other international players accounting for as much as one quarter of Western money on the expenditure for protecting Russia's biodiversity. This foreign influence made many Russian politicians extremely uneasy.

However, despite all of these gigantic efforts, and similar to the case in North America, nothing remains of the many original habitats such as the steppe. "We now need to introduce the specially-protected areas system almost forcibly to counterbalance irrational natural-resource-use, and to prevent deterioration of landscapes and valuable sites".

It becomes clear from the text that Russia and its Zapovedniks etc. are not set up for the information society at all, and thus Russian high quality online (raw) data are hard to come by still. Much crucial biodiversity information is published though in hardcopy and journals, or exists in filing cabinets, private ownerships and cabinets, and as expert knowledge. Otherwise, check the Russian Conservation News found online www.russianconservation.org.

One cannot find a better and centralized overview of Russian conservation history issues than this book; its detailed Appendices are further assets consisting of current and former Zapovednik lists, a Kyrillic reference list and in-depth annotations for each chapter. I find that this book is a little too friendly on the widespread view in Russia that traditional Zapovednik management caters primarily to the Russian race but leaves natives and other ethnical groups out. Marine protected areas were apparently not really part of Russia's nature protection system either.

However, "Come back in hundred years, then let's talk" (And in the meantime, I highly suggest buying and reading this important book).

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A Field Guide to the Identification of Pebbles

By E. Van der Flier-Keller. 2007. Harbour Publishing, Box 219 Madeira Park, British Columbia V0N 2H0 Canada. 9 inch by 8 inch pamphlet, \$7.95

Professor Van der Flier-Keller has produced a neat pebble guide for children. She has condensed fundamental pebble geology into a single page. Then she portrays 34 types of rock as they appear when they are transformed into pebbles. She adds in a few man-made objects that also appear on beaches, such as glass. The pamphlet is a single long sheet of plasticized paper

with clear, "life" size photographs of pebbles. It is easy to use and is ideal for children as it does not get over-complicated and therefore overwhelming. For example, it only shows two forms of granite – pink and white. This is quite sufficient for an 8-year old to absorb. While the author has reduced the text to a simple explanation she does use the correct technical terms throughout. Younger children may need help with some of the terms (plutonic) or concepts (glacial deposits), but then this is what parents are for. The pamphlet folds

to 4.75 inches by 9 inches and can readily slip into a pocket or glove compartment.

Although aimed at children this is a useful tool for the non-geologist adult who does not have the time (or inclination) to master the complex technology of geological science. I have a habit of picking up small

rocks and pebbles from the places I visit. I have not been consistent in identifying them, but I am sure this pamphlet will help me improve.

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The Amphibians of Belarus. By S. Drobenkov, R. Novitsky, L. Kosova, K. Ryzhevich, M. Pikulik. 2006. Pensoft Publishers, Geo Milev Street 13a, 1111 Sofia, Bulgaria. 176 pages. EURO 34.00 Paper.

The Amphibians and Reptiles in Bulgaria. By V. Beshkov and K. Nanev. 2006. Pensoft Publishers, Geo Milev Street 13a, 1111 Sofia, Bulgaria. 120 pages. EURO 38.90 Cloth.

* **Animal Skulls, A Guide to North American Species.** By Mark Elbroch. 2006. Stackpole Books, 5067 Ritter Road, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17055 USA. 448 pages. \$44.95 PB 740 pages.

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† **Conservation of the Black-tailed Prairie Dog.** Edited by J. Hoogland. 2006. Island Press, 1718 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 300, Washington D.C. 20009. 368 pages. U.S. \$35 Paper.

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* **Migrating Raptors of the World – Their Ecology and Conservation.** By Keith L. Bildstein. 2006. Cornell University Press, 512 East State Street, Ithaca, New York 14850 USA. 344 pages. \$35.00 Cloth.

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