



BOOK REVIEW

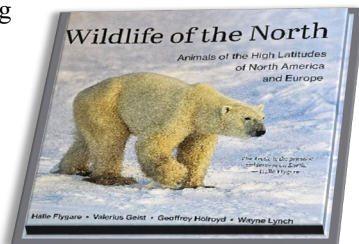
Wildlife of the North

Animals of the High Latitudes of North America and Europe

By Hälle Flygare, Valerius Geist, Geoffrey Holroyd, and Wayne Lynch

2023 – Firefly Books, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada

This book is outstanding for the quality of its photographs depicting terrestrial and aquatic mammals, birds, and plants (tundra beauties) inhabiting the extremely



beautiful Arctic landscapes. The book starts with a voyage through prehistoric times and identifies the Ice Age Survivors, i.e., large herbivores and carnivores. Thereafter, the authors describe many iconic species which played an important role in the development of Nordic human communities: marine mammals, bears (*Ursus* spp.) and wolves (*Canis lupus*), barren-ground caribou (*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus*), moose (*Alces americanus*), rodents and hares (*Lepus* spp.), and more. However, several species which had an impact on the development of our country are absent. For example, both the muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*) and the beaver (*Castor canadensis*), which played an important role in the fur industry, and have the ability to modify and maintain aquatic habitats that are beneficial for many animal and plant species, are absent. This is followed by a review of Arctic birds including grouses, raptors, cliff dwellers, ducks and swans, and gulls (*Larus* spp.). Again, some ecologically important species such as jaegers (*Stercorarius* spp.), and the popular gray jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*), are missing. Readers would need to consult

more taxa-specific publications to gain a full understanding of the various species inhabiting the Arctic. Nevertheless, this book provides the layman with a good appreciation of the fauna and flora of the great North.

Most importantly, this book warns Canadians about the fragility of the Arctic ecosystems and their threatened wildlife. Climate change (global warming) threatens the persistence of several wildlife habitats and populations. Poor management (e.g., overhunting) further endangers some species.

This book is a significant addition to any nature library, and it should be used at primary and secondary levels to teach students about biodiversity at northern latitudes. This definitely is a book to share with politicians to remind them about the challenges that threaten the future of Arctic communities, both wildlife and humans.

Ultimately, this is a beautiful coffee-table book to display.

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