Book Review – Wildlife Forensic Investigation


Wildlife crime is an increasingly serious issue for populations of both threatened and common species in many parts of the world. In particular, the use of poisons and other toxic chemicals are one of the greatest threats to vultures in many parts of the world, especially in Africa.

Often, one of the key difficulties in prosecuting cases where the illegal use of chemicals has resulted in the death of wildlife is forensic evidence. For this reason in particular, but also for many others, the publication of this extensive book on forensic investigations of wildlife will be welcomed.

Between them, the principal authors have many years’ experience in veterinary medicine and international law, but also a strong inter-disciplinary approach. This is reflected in the list of 26 additional contributors that come from a wide-range of disciplines.

A strong emphasis on natural history and incorporating this into investigations resonates in the text, which this reviewer supports firmly. Good natural history observations are grounded in context but also, occasionally, instinct. It seems much the same way during forensic investigations, where the detailed recording of evidence is complemented by clues or information not easily revealed without context.

A highlight is the emphasis on data recording methods and protocols, with reference to case studies. The appendices provide a mass of additional and practical information.

The book is extensive and production quality is very high, which is reflected in the cover price. However, for a large number of researchers who might encounter wildlife crime, but especially government departments and investigators working in the field, this volume would be an important addition to their resources.

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