

Lesser Black-backed Gull-like bird is now considered a hybrid of *Larus heuglini* and *Larus vegae*. This controversial bird winters in very small numbers in the area depicted.

So once again I believe Princeton has published a very useful guide for the traveller. This book may not

be ideal for all birders, but for those of us who have to be concerned with weight and size, this compact volume is a gem.

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Carnivores of British Columbia

By David F. Hatler, David W. Nagorsen, and Alison M. Beal. 2008. Royal British Columbia Museum, 675 Belleville Street, Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9W2 Canada. 416 pages. 27.95 USD.

Carnivores of British Columbia is the fifth in a series of six books to replace and update the 1964 handbook, *The Mammals of British Columbia* by Ian McTaggart-Cowan and Charles Guiguet. The first four of the series cover (1) bats, (2) opossums, shrews, and moles, (3) hoofed mammals, and (4) rodents and lagomorphs. The sixth volume will cover marine mammals.

This well-researched volume covers 21 carnivores that occur in British Columbia. The carnivore families presented include the canids, ursids, procyonids, mustelids, and felids. Although carnivores as well, the five species in the Phocidae (haired seals) and Otariidae (eared seals) families will be included in the marine mammal volume.

The book begins with a general biology section that discusses why an animal should belong to the Order Carnivora – a central theme in the ecology of the carnivore group as a whole is the procurement of food by predation. Unique features that set carnivores apart from other mammals include canine and carnassial teeth, relatively heavy skulls with strongly developed facial muscles, and clawed digits on each foot. Carnivores tend to travel widely in search of prey, search out new territories, and other activities that require long ventures. Carnivores have keen senses and large brains, needed to help track down food, as well as to avoid danger and interaction with other species. The general biology section also covers resting and den sites, movements, home range and social behaviour, reproduction, mortality, health, and longevity.

The biogeography of British Columbia is included to provide the reader with the geographic background and a required land mass orientation lesson on the distribution of British Columbia carnivores within the 10 ecoprovinces. The first table in the book provides a handy reference where the reader should expect what carnivore species is in what ecoprovince. Some species, such as the coyote (*Canis latrans*), occur in all 10, but others, such as the sea otter (*Enhydra lutris*), occur only in one (but may have a minor occurrence in another). Following the general biology section is a checklist of species, an identification key, and a skull key.

The species accounts for the 21 British Columbia carnivores follow the same order as the checklist, which is on pages 41 and 42. Each account includes a drawing of the animal and the skull. Each account is tailored to British Columbia, making the information relevant for that specific geographic region. If a particular ecological aspect of a British Columbia carnivore is not well researched, information about that carnivore from other studies outside of British Columbia is used to fill the data gap. The information in the species accounts is divided into nine sections: (1) other common names, (2) description, (3) distribution and habitat, (4) natural history, (5) human uses, (6) taxonomy, (7) conservation status and management, (8) remarks, and (9) selected references. These sections provide an adequate and comprehensive ecological study of the species, and are a result of more than 40 years of research published in peer-reviewed journals, and other sources. Each account has a distribution map specific to British Columbia showing both museum and harvest records, and throughout most accounts are other relevant black-and-white photos. For example, on page 117, there is a picture of black bear (*Ursus americanus*) claw marks on a poplar trunk, showing the reader what might be encountered in the field.

At the end of the book is an appendix listing the scientific names of organisms mentioned in the book, as well as a glossary, and a list of references. Overall, the book is well organized and written. Unfortunately, the handbook does not have a colour plate section showing the 21 carnivore species, although publication costs were the likely reason it was not included. *Carnivores of British Columbia* is an excellent addition to the six-part series, and anyone interested in the carnivorous mammals of British Columbia will be in good hands with this volume.

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