

accurate description of this top-of-the-food chain predator and dispel the myths of wanton ferocity that have led to its persecution by man in defence of game and stock. The author also catalogues the sad decline of a creature that used to range throughout mainland UK and presents up-to-date information about its present distribution and efforts to protect it. The first hand descriptions of breeding and raising Wild Cats are superb and the author's observations of their hunting are enthralling, yet interspersed with easy to read 'harder' data. The author also addresses the sightings of various mystery black cats and large stock-killing beasts around the country in the 1980s, uncovering the truth behind many of the sensationalist press stories and vindicating the Scottish Wild Cat.

Overall, the text is easy to read and carries the distinct and occasionally earthy attitude of a man whose experiences raising Scottish Wild Cats and living the solitary life makes for quite a unique approach. Compared with the emphasis in the text on portraying the Scottish Wild Cat as a beautiful and highly specialized predator, I found many of the illustrations annoyingly anthropomorphic. Otherwise my only major criticism of the text is that it is by necessity rather short in order to fit in with the excellent series on British Natural History from the publisher. Perhaps readers who enjoy this notable excursion could read Mr Tomkies' other books, particularly *Wild Cat Haven*, for more in-depth accounts of his unique life among the Scottish Wild Cats.

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Handbook for the Animal Licence Holder, 2nd edition

Edited by J Bunyan (1991). Institute of Biology: London. 62pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, 20 Queensberry Place, London SW7 2DZ, UK (ISBN 0 900 490 27 6) Price £10.60.

Directive 86/609/EEC of 24 November 1986 triggered the proliferation across Europe of national legislation designed to bring the scientific use of animals within a common overall framework. The UK was first to complete this process.

Possibly the principal change introduced by the *Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986* was the concept of cost benefit analysis in which the potential for animal suffering is weighed against the potential for biomedical and scientific advance. This formalized concern for animal well-being is reflected in new attitudes towards training those responsible for the scientific use of animals. This short book is directed at such persons and succeeds a somewhat slimmer volume by H V Wyatt, published by the Institute of Biology in 1980.

The handbook is divided in to two parts. The first outlines the principal provisions of the *Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986*, but being addressed by four authors, well known in UK, tends to approach its provisions from different directions. This leads to irritating repetitions of certain topics whereas others such as the responsibilities of licence holders, the role of the inspectorate, the possible contribution of ethical

committees or activities of the Animal Procedures Committee are mentioned briefly if at all. Much of this part addresses similar ground to the HMSO publication 'Guidance on the operation of the *Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986*' which bears Home Office authority and has been approved by parliament. The authors have elaborated on some of the important issues and direct the reader to further reading. References are arranged by chapter and although most are up-to-date and well chosen, it was distracting to find several re-listed under different chapter headings. The bibliography will be of interest to those working with laboratory animals not only in the UK, but also elsewhere. P A Duffy's chapter on alternatives to animal procedures is brief but very well referenced.

A book of this length cannot be comprehensive, but failure to provide a balanced view of the Act could leave serious gaps in the new licensee's understanding.

Part two comprises three chapters addressing experimental design. These are well chosen and are presented vigorously, if somewhat theoretically. Chapter 6 addresses statistical design in a succinct and very pertinent way although I was rather disappointed by the choice of references which support it.

A more serious omission is the lack of discussion on the background to legislation and its ethical framework. Although mention is made of humane end-points and severity banding, considerably more guidance is appropriate on how these should be assessed and how pain, suffering and distress could be minimized by careful consideration of protocol.

The book itself suffers from attempting to achieve too much in too short a space and I had difficulty in deciding to whom it was addressed. Part one would be of value to intending personal licensees and would form useful supplementary reading to training courses. The second part appears to be addressed to intending project licence holders for whom formal training is still at a relatively early stage. Mr O'Donoghue's excellent article on the European perception of competence, while of general interest, would be of particular value to those establishing training courses and for holders of Certificates of Designation. There is something in this book for everybody. If used on training courses for new licensees it should be supported with carefully chosen additional material. Intending project licence holders should be more thoroughly acquainted with the law than this book pre-supposes but it does contain useful meat - perhaps the starter to a grander repast!

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Deer

Norma Chapman (1991). Whittet Books Limited: London. 136pp. Hardback. Obtainable from the publishers, 18 Anley Road, London W14 0BY, UK (ISBN 0 905483 88 X) Price £6.95.

Assuming that you have an interest in deer, and a spare £6.95, and cannot answer questions such as 'what is a hart?', 'what is the difference between a huemal and a