

Book review: A MINIATURE OCEAN

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(GEPŠ), 221 pp.

I was asked to prepare my scientific opinion regarding the manuscript of the monograph entitled "*A miniature ocean*". This manuscript is dealing with the Aquarium in Piran, an institution with long tradition in the Slovenian coastal town. The monograph with 222 pages is a remarkable compilation of data, concerning the Piran Aquarium and its scientific and educational role in the northern Adriatic area. Opening chapters offer a short description of the history of aquaristics and the roles of modern aquariums. The authors are trying to convey the importance of aquaria from different aspects, such as marine biology, nature conservation, education, cultural role and popularization. Separate chapter is dealing with the scientific contribution the staff of the Piran Aquarium made together with the partner institutions, such as the Marine Biology Station Piran of the National Institute of Biology, in publishing in scientific literature, with special regards to invasive species, tropicalization, and rare, less known and endangered species. A special chapter is dedicated to the functioning of the Piran Aquarium from various aspects, such as animal collection and husbandry, life support systems, etc. The bulk of the monography presents a survey of algal and animal species, which are regularly or occasionally displayed in the tanks of Piran Aquarium. One hundred and seventy species are presented in this chapter. A key for understanding various definitions is presented before the list itself, so the reader has no problem in understanding what certain labels mean. Every single species is presented on one page with a close-up photograph, a short description, its size, habitat and distribution. Finally, if there are any facts the reader may find interesting, they are mentioned at the very end of the page. This chapter is followed by a dictionary where all scientific terms are explained, by index of Latin and Slovenian names of species, literature and

presentation of the authors. The monograph is illustrated with more than 230 excellent color photographs and some original illustrations in black and white.

Since books such as this one are not common in scientific literature, it is quite difficult to compare it and asses its value. However, it is a valuable contribution since it presents in detail an important Slovenian institution and shows the importance such institution has to the local community, also demonstrating the wide range of activities done by the staff of the Aquarium. One of the most important tasks is certainly raising the awareness of how rich the Adriatic Sea actually is.



To my opinion the value of this book is in detailing various contributions the Aquarium has made to the scientific community and providing an overview of marine turtles rehabilitation cases. The monography is also trying to present the importance of new processes such as bioinvasion and tropicalization in modifying the floral and faunal communities in the northern Adriatic Sea.

The survey of aquarium species is also a valuable part, since it could provide help to professionals working in the field of education.

The monography "*A miniature ocean*" is to my opinion a valuable contribution as it presents finer points of good aquarium practice to a wider public, while also turning the reader's attention to the richness and diversity of the Adriatic Sea.

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