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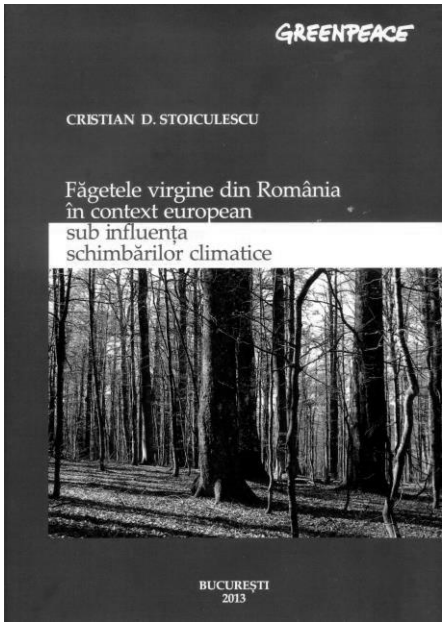


STOICULESCU C.D. – 2013, ***The Primeval Beech Forests in Romania in European Context under the Influence of Climatic Changes***, (Făgetele virgine din România în context european sub influenţa schimbărilor climatice), Greenpeace, Bucureşti, 416 pp.

This book is the result of a vast labour of compilation by Cristian D. Stoiculescu, edited by the Greenpeace organization. It is not surprising that the primeval forests in Romania inspire numerous scientists around Europe, both those working on fundamental research and in nature conservation. As the author points out at the beginning of the book, the pristine forests of Romania cover some 250,000 ha., and they are one of the most valuable heritages that Europe still possesses.

Overall, the work of Stoiculescu is well structured and presented. It should be much appreciated by the students in their early years of study at universities, especially by those who wish to get closer to the history of forest conservation in Romania. Having demonstrating the need for careful management of primeval forests, the author devotes much space to a detailed description of several important protected areas for woodlands in Romania. Moreover, a body of information is brought to the reader on the taxonomy of *Fagus* in the country, the biodiversity of the beech forests, and the administration of national forests across history.

The book comprises 24 single-standing chapters. Of the multitude of topics I was enjoying while reading the book, I could mention the following: the biodiversity of the beech forests (cap. 20), aesthetic values of beech communities (cap. 28), European measures for safeguarding of the forests and the environment (cap. 38). These were stimulating from a personal perspective, and I was surprised also by the three special chapters that are dedicated to lists of protected or endemic species, official documents, and photos.

As evidence of the exhaustive nature of the book, the chapter dealing with the biodiversity of the beech communities (cap. 20) provides numerous tabular data on various

beech forest classification types according to different official criteria, such as the former forest classifications of Romania or the newly implemented Natura 2000 habitats. For instance, beech forests have been assigned to ten different Natura 2000 habitats that have been begun to be protected under the regulations of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, revised in 2007.

The body of the text is enriched with numerous tables and pictures, as gathered by the author from different published sources. The high number of maps that accompany the text is surprising, especially as they are illustrative examples drawn from a wide range of topics. For instance, they comprise valuable ready-to-use information about the forest types in Romania (cap. 8), the distribution of the main primeval forests (cap. 9), a map of the Romanian landscapes (cap. 20), or even maps depicting the influence of climate (cap. 29).

All sections of the book are broadly comprehensive and up-to-date. The author cites more than 700 sources and of these around 13% are his own works, highlighting his valuable contribution to Romanian research on the broad topic of forest ecosystems.

Although this challenging book is addressed to readers from the scientific community, the way it is written makes it interesting as well to general readers. Dr Stoiculescu's book could therefore be strongly recommended to anyone wishing to find interesting information on probably the most outstanding ecosystem Europe still has. Moreover, the author calls attention to the fact that, despite ambitious forestry conservation policies in Romania over the last years, there is still a significant loss of woodland areas, as shown in the study presented in the 30th chapter, i.e. 3 ha. of forest are cut each hour.

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