

## Zoology

### THE WILD MAMMALS OF MISSOURI

by Charles M. Schwartz and Elizabeth R. Schwartz. 2nd. ed. 1981. University of Missouri Press (Columbia, MO 65211). 356 p. \$24.00 hardback. Softback price not given.

This book is one of the best compilations of mammalian behavior, natural history, distribution, and species diversity presently available. The Missouri limitation in the book title may initially detract field biologists from considering its applicability within their own geographic regions, but the majority of mammals listed are endemics of Kansas, Nebraska, Indiana, Iowa, and Illinois, as well as Missouri. The national distribution maps included for each species attest to this.

The book is an excellent reference for high school students and teachers interested in research projects on selected mammals. Diagrams of skull skeletal elements are of sufficient detail to facilitate identification of field data, e.g. skull skeletal remains in owl pellets. Diagrams of individual species are clear and there are label and text prompts to key specimens trapped

or found in the field. The detailed representations of species-specific dentine patterns found on the cheek teeth and incisors provide further identification aids. If the size and weight of the book could be reduced, it would be a competitor for the currently available field guides.

The selected reference sections are the least useful parts of the book. I gave special attention to the sections covering those species involved in my own research efforts, i.e., fox squirrels and coyotes. A number of recent (1974-present) papers on fox squirrel natural history and behavior, based on radiotelemetry studies, have appeared in *American Midland Naturalist*, *Journal of Wildlife Management*, and the *Journal of Mammalogy*. These are important contributions in the autecology of fox squirrels and are noticeably absent in text and reference sections here.

The authors might also consider the general availability of some references given. Special publications, bulletins, project reports, and out-of-print citations are nearly impossible to obtain as additional sources of information. Their inclusion as references are of questionable value.

The reference section on coyotes is more contemporary than that on fox squirrels. Some citations on age distribution of hunted coyotes would be appropriate additions and it is hoped they will appear in later editions.

The "Importance" section of the coyote chapter could have included an elaboration of human/coyote interactions. Coyotes, more than any other mammalian species, have demonstrated behavioral adaptations culminating in cohabitation with human settlements. Their cosmopolitan distribution and at least five recent publications in various journals dealing with the subject of human/coyote interactions support this suggested addition.

This book was produced by individuals with field experience and a sensitivity to the needs of teachers. Students should be comfortable with the text, style, and reading level presented. It will remain as a supplemental or required text in the field ecology courses I teach.

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