

THE BATS OF TEXAS. *The W. L. Moody, Jr., Natural History Series, Number 11.*

By David J. Schmidly; illustrated by Christine Stetter. Texas A & M University Press, College Station (Texas). \$34.50 (hardcover); \$19.95 (paper). xvii + 188 p. + 4 pl.; ill.; index. ISBN: 0-89096-403-3 (hc); 0-89096-450-5 (pb). 1991.

If biodiversity, conservation, global ecology, and other related current issues are to be fully appreciated by the nonscientific community, then a commitment from the scientists who work in these areas is needed. Such a commitment would involve the production of books, articles and reviews in a framework that can be understood by individuals outside highly specialized areas. Schmidly's book, *The Bats of Texas*; is organized and written in a vocabulary, format and lucid style that accomplishes this goal.

His book provides detailed scientific information on anatomy, measurements, distribution, taxonomy, keys to species, specimens examined, and a literature review that is to be expected in such a geographic review of a specific higher taxon. There is also a commitment to subjects for which bats have a very specialized biology, such as echolocation and vocalization, flight, reproduction and life expectancy, vision and olfaction, thermal regulation, and population dynamics. It also provides information on ecology, seasonal occurrence, public health, conservation, parasites, legislation, and construction of bat roosts that goes far beyond the typical treatment in a taxonomic review. All of the topics are presented in a fashion that can be easily understood by the nonspecialist as well as young people who might find the world of bats fascinating. I found the book to be well written, accurate, and pleasant to read.

The book is extremely well illustrated, including drawings that assist the nonspecialist in understanding a specialized vocabulary, dental illustrations, plus well-documented diagnostic features that separate species. Sixteen color photographs, ranging from mug shots to bats in flight, introduce the reader to a variety of bat species. In addition, there are numerous black-and-white photos.

Any review of the bats of Texas would be remiss not to mention that more species of bats occur in Texas than in any other state in the union. A total of 32 species representing 4 families occur naturally in the state. Feeding diversity includes not only the typical insectivore, but also nectar feeding bats and one vampire bat.

When I moved to Texas 25 years ago, one of my goals was to write a treatise on the bats of Texas. Although I never fulfilled this goal, here the job has not only been well done, but also done in a timely fashion that reflects Schmidly's long-term commitment to bats, conservation, education of the general public, and quality work. I congratulate Professor Schmidly on this excellent accomplishment.

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