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## WILD MAMMALS OF WESTERN CANADA

ARTHUR AND CANDACE SAVAGE. 1981. Western Producer Prairie Books, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. 209 pp. 100 color photos. \$34.95.

In this excellent book Arthur and Candace Savage attempt to present a large body of scientific knowledge in a format for the layman. They are remarkably successful. The text is easy to read, yet packed with information. This high information content makes the book attractive to the keen naturalist and professional biologist as well as to the layman.

The overall quality of the book is high. The 100 color photos, many of which cover full pages, are well reproduced. I could find no problems with the binding or printing and, most amazingly, not a single typographical error.

Unfortunately, despite its title, this book does not cover all Western Canadian mammals. After an introduction to mammalogy and Western Canadian mammals, one or more representatives of each order are discussed. Of the 162 species listed in the checklist at the end of the book, only 70 are dealt with in detail. Most of the larger, well known carnivores and ungulates are included. Thus the text deals with all 7 lagomorphs, all 11 cloven-hoofed mammals, and 23 of 24 carnivores, while only 2 of 13 insectivores and 2 of 16 bats are discussed.

The authors give a good outline of the natural history of each species chosen for discussion. Their treatment includes

one or more color photographs and a map of the North American range. Each section of the text was submitted to experts for review. This undoubtedly contributed to the lack of errors in the text.

A small number of errors, usually generalizations or statements of hypothesis as facts, have slipped into the text. For example Racoons are said to have larger litters in their northern range, "presumably, in part, as compensation for high wintertime losses." In fact litter size in racoons, like other animals, is probably adapted to what the parents can usually raise, not to anticipated mortality. To be fair the authors did qualify their statement with "presumably."

On page 172 the authors argue that Mountain Sheep, which cannot defend their lambs from Cougars and wolves, have a weak maternal bond and abandon the lamb if attacked. Moose and pronghorns are said to form strong maternal bonds. To explain this the authors remind us that a healthy moose can repel wolves but "pronghorns usually only have to deal with coyotes." This conveniently ignores the Prairie Wolf which undoubtedly preyed on pronghorns until exterminated by man.

Range distribution maps do not include the presettlement ranges of species such as the wolf and the checklist does not include the extirpated Swift Fox and Black-footed Ferret. The range maps have some minor inaccuracies, parts of the Saskatchewan range of Moose and Elk are missed while the Racoon hasn't quite extended as far as shown. These are small errors considering the maps cover all of North America.

One final feature which I like is inclusion of a 24-page bibliography arranged to follow subjects in the text. This bibliography, while not complete, directs the reader to further information and greatly increases the book's value as an introduction to mammals. *Wild Mammals of Western Canada* will therefore be a valuable addition to school and public libraries as well as to private collections. — Reviewed by Dale G. Hjertaas, 919 Cook Crescent, Regina, Saskatchewan. S4X 2L9.

## NATURAL HISTORY NOTEBOOK NO. 3

National Museum of Natural Sciences,  
Ottawa, 1979.

From Anteater to Zebra, this 3rd notebook covers 52 species of most interesting animals from all continents. Each animal is discussed in 1 page consisting of a black and white drawing and 100-150 words of text, mainly covering

behavior. The opposite page is blank for notes. Each plate has previously been published individually in newspapers across the country but they were combined in booklet form in response to many requests.

Unfortunately, each plate is unrelated to the others and the booklet lacks a theme. The illustrations are of excellent quality and the text very informative in spite of its conciseness. The distribution of the species is not always included; it especially disturbed me when the author did not mention the White Pelican as breeding in Canada as well as the U.S. I also wonder how useful the blank page is, considering that 50 species are foreign to North America and most are rarely present in zoos across the country?

Altogether an easy-to-read, informative booklet, beautifully laid out and of very general interest, but not for you if you are looking for information on Canadian species. — Reviewed by Paule B. Hjertaas, 919 Cook Crescent, Regina, Saskatchewan. S4X 2L9



Cougar

Wayne Lynch