

Book Reviews

ZOOLOGY

Amphibiens et reptiles du Quebec et les maritimes

By Jean-Francois Desroches et David Rodrigue. 2004. Editions Michel Quinton, Waterloo, Quebec JOE 2N0. 288 pages. Can \$40.00.

The eye of the reader is quickly overwhelmed by blaze of sharp, high quality colour photographs throughout virtually every page of the body of the text, pages 11 to 235. These are the combined work of 20 photographers, with the authors contributing the majority, DR credited with 97 and J-FD with 42 compared to 103 by all others. This section covers preface, forward, introduction, definitions of amphibian and reptile, a code of ethics for herpetologists, observation and conservation of amphibians and reptiles, introduction to each major grouping within the two classes and individual species accounts. The latter include description, similar species, reproduction, habitat, critical area, food, predators, status, notes. These accounts demonstrate the authors' familiarity with the varied characteristics and ecology of each species.

A map covering from the western border of Ontario to the Maritimes and the adjacent northern United States depicts each species range in a splash of red. Those for the Quebec portion are drawn from the comprehensive database of the Quebec Atlas for which Rodrigue is now the chief coordinator. This project is based at the St. Lawrence Valley Natural History Society and has financial supported from la Societe de la faune et de la parcs du Quebec. The data for the Maritime maps was provided by Don McAlpine at the New Brunswick Museum. The only problem with these is that the maps are too small allow detail and disjunct populations are easily overlooked.

In all, 40 species are given detailed treatment (21 amphibians and 19 reptiles (nearly half of the species total for Canada). Two sea turtles are not recorded for Quebec and two frog species, two freshwater turtles and two snakes are absent from the Maritimes. An additional account covers the complex subject of diploid and polyploid salamanders involving hybridization between species of the genus *Ambystoma*. Three more

reptiles are either introduced (Red-eared Slider turtle, Eastern Box Turtle) or reported but not confirmed (Timber Rattlesnake).

Pages 236 to 288 conclude the book. These include diagrams of key features and identification keys to adults of both amphibians and reptiles, a standard in many guides. But in addition, there are keys to amphibian eggs, salamander larvae, tadpoles (frog larvae), and cast skins of snakes, subjects often poorly covered or omitted in other guides. Conservation is emphasized with a tables presenting the number of individuals for each of the nine common native species which can be held without permit in captivity in Quebec (two salamanders, toad, five frogs and the garter snake). Another table gives the status assigned to species whose continued survival is of most concern in Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Groups coordinating observations of amphibians and reptiles in each of these provinces are also listed with addresses. Additional appendices cover the etymology of all scientific names and a glossary of 100 technical terms from "aire de repartition ou de distribution" to "zooplankton". Although this, like the entire text, is in French, it facilitates the reading of the book for anyone with at least a rudimentary grasp of the language.

The bibliography is arranged by guides and books, journal articles, and technical reports. The latter is particularly valuable as it includes work not widely referenced elsewhere. The Quebec literature is particularly comprehensive but the Maritime references are more sparse due to the greater familiarity of the authors with the literature of their native Quebec.

The authors deserve the highest praise for their conception, enthusiasm, care, and toil to bring this guide to completion, as does the publisher for the superb quality of the production. It is the new benchmark for other provinces to try and match.

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Mammals of Australia

By J. Turner. 2004. Pensoft Publishers. Acad. G. Bonchev Str., Bl. 6, 1113 Sofia, Bulgaria. 216 pages. Eur 38.50 Cloth.

Having a particular interest in camels at this time, the first thing I tried was to look up this species. The book is arranged alphabetically by common name. So

I tried "Camel" without success. Next I looked under D for "Dromedary", also without success. By going through page by page I found "One-humped Camel" under O. Under this system I noted that House Mouse and Humpbacked Whale shared a page – an odd com-