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Sargeant in Prairie Naturalist (September 1984) 16(3).

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PRAIRIE MAMMALS

Mammals of the Northern Great Plains. J. Knox Jones, Jr., David M. Armstrong, Robert S. Hoffmann and Clyde Jones. 1983. University of Nebraska Press. Lincoln. 379 Pages. $32.50 (cloth).

This book is a welcome addition to the general references available on the mammalian fauna of the Northern Great Plains, a region encompassing North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. No similar book about the mammals of these states has been published since Vernon Bailey's 1926 (not 1927 as shown on pages 2 and 361) publication of the mammals of North Dakota. Situated mid-continent between major landform, climatic, and habitat zones, the Northern Great Plains is a challenging region for the study of mammals. Many mammalian species more adapted to conditions elsewhere have invaded but failed to traverse or establish permanent residency in the region. Numerous pockets of diverse habitat that dot the plains facilitate the establishment of certain mammals, and the massive impact of intensive farming will continue to affect the distribution and abundance of many species. The present book provides a valuable reference and hopefully will stimulate additional work on the mammals of the region.

Mammals of the Northern Great Plains is a handsome 18.5 x 26 cm book printed on high-quality glossy paper and illustrated with 206 black-and-white photos and drawings. Although the text is easy to read and intended for a varied audience, it contains sufficient detail to make it useful to professional mammalogists. A glossary is provided to aid those unfamiliar with some terminology. The book is organized into 27 sections. The first 11 sections (26 pages) introduce readers to the history of mammalian investigations in the region and how these studies are conducted. They also provide descriptions of the environment and informative discussions of mammalian communities and zoogeography. These are followed by a section on the Class Mammalia (primarily on evolution and adaptations), a key to the orders of mammals of the region, and a checklist of the region's 105 native and six introduced mammal species. The bulk of the book (pages 36-346) consists of species accounts arranged by order and family except that introduced species are treated together at the end. Identification keys are furnished with the discussion of each order and family. Diagrams of distinguishing characteristics are inserted as needed to aid in identifying certain mammals. Species accounts provide useful information on taxonomy, distribution, and natural history. The natural history information is current and addresses subjects such as reproduction, food habits, and habitat use; selected references are provided.

Species distribution maps are one of the most useful features of a book of this type, and in this respect the book could have been improved. Range maps are provided for nearly all species but there are inconsistencies. For example, no range map is included for the wolf (*Canis lupus*) because of its "uncertain status" (p. 254) although it was originally distributed over the entire area and there even have been 20th century records. Nevertheless, a joint range map is provided for the marten (*Martes americana*) and fisher (*M. pennanti*) (p. 275), even though the status of both species is less certain than that of the wolf. Shading could have been used effectively to separate past from present distributions. The

range maps are "deliberately conservative" (p. 3) and no distribution records are shown except for a few species where data are insufficient to assign a range. Hence, although the range maps provide general information, they are of limited value to professionals interested in documenting range changes.

This book is a must for anyone seriously interested in the mammals of the region.

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