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Book Review: Los Mamíferos de la Provincia de Jujuy, Argentina

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BOOK REVIEWS

Journal of Mammalogy, 85(3):581–584, 2004

Díaz, M. M., and R. Barquez. 2002. LOS MAMÍFEROS DE LA PROVINCIA DE JUJUY, ARGENTINA. Literature of Latin America, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 326 pp. ISBN 950-9725-54-4 price (paper), \$15.

The province of Jujuy lies in the northwestern corner of Argentina, abutting Chile and Bolivia in the west and northeast, and ranging from 500 to 6,000 m in elevation. As a result of its location and topography, vegetation ranges from subtropical forests in the lowlands to high-altitude grasslands on the slopes of the Andes, and more than 130 mammalian species can be encountered in the province, from mice-eating bats to forest and pampas deer to llamas and guanacos. This book defies pigeonholing as a single-purpose guide, and contains a wider range of information than biogeographical and identification data. There is much here of use for mammal researchers in general, making this book both a field guide for the layperson with interest in mammals as well as a reference for researchers, students, and wildlife managers. I believe that the authors have reached a difficult balance of presenting enough technical information for professionals, while using terminology that the nonspecialist can read and enjoy.

This book comprises 4 sections. The 1st section provides a brief introduction to the geography and vegetation of the province. The 2nd section provides instructions on how to use the book, which are brief and clear, and the 3rd contains the species accounts. In addition to species recorded in the province, the authors include a brief note on mammals likely to inhabit the province and recorded from neighboring provinces or in Bolivia. The authors also describe domestic and introduced species, and comment on historical observations of species that have never been substantiated by specimens. Finally, the last section is a glossary with the terms that are likely to be unfamiliar to the nonspecialist. The authors also present a brief discussion of the higher taxonomic groups in the province and summarize natural history and taxonomic notes where pertinent, while keeping the length of these notes to a minimum. They pay special attention to listing current taxonomic problems clearly, making it a valuable resource for those in need of this type of information who might find taxonomic controversies difficult to follow.

Díaz and Barquez have extensive field experience in Jujuy, and their firsthand knowledge is evident in most species accounts. In most accounts, the authors provide interesting notes on natural history, behavior, and conservation challenges. All accounts are presented in a similar format: a section on the species distribution in Jujuy is followed by habitat information, a general description, dental formulae, and a section with comments on biology and conservation. The latter section

includes information about habits, ecology, comparisons with other species, and any noteworthy observations. A black and white drawing of the animal follows the descriptions, together with drawings of skulls and, occasionally, teeth.

The book's introduction could have been more comprehensive, and, considering the altitudinal variation encountered, a topographic map would be helpful. Those unfamiliar with the area likely would also appreciate a more extensive overview of the region's flora and fauna. There are some details to be corrected in a 2nd edition, 2 of which are relatively serious: the legend for the vegetation map (fig. 2) does not define the different shades of gray used on the map, and the lack of scale bars next to the drawings makes it difficult to estimate the size of the animals. Additionally, figures would benefit by arrows pointing at important or diagnostic features. In the introduction, the authors indicate that a dichotomous key for the species was included, but this was not included with my copy.

If the aim of the book is also to educate the public, the book does a good job, especially considering the lack of available books and other material in Spanish. As noted above, the book includes clear and brief comments on systematics and taxonomy, but overall it is more oriented towards those with more of an inclination for natural history than for taxonomy. Although this book made me aware of the extent of mammalian diversity in this province and of the daunting conservation problems mammalian diversity faces due to habitat loss, additional notes on local conservation challenges would be a valuable addition. The feeling one gets after browsing through the comments section is that there is a great deal to be done in South American mammalogy and that we still know very little about the ecology and natural history of most of the rare rodents and bats found in Jujuy Province.

In summary, this book would be an excellent companion to a mammalogy course centered in that portion of South America. The few flaws mentioned above can be easily remedied in a later edition, but otherwise students and researchers will find this a very useful book. Anyone involved in mammal conservation in Latin America will welcome this book, and others like it, that can aid their efforts to promote public awareness of wild mammals in that part of the world.—FEDERICO G. HOFFMANN, *School of Biological Sciences, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588-0118, USA; federico@unlserve.unl.edu*

Journal of Mammalogy, 85(3):581–582, 2004

Sukumar, R. 2003. THE LIVING ELEPHANTS: EVOLUTIONARY ECOLOGY, BEHAVIOR, AND CONSERVATION. Oxford University Press, New York, 478 pp. ISBN 0-19-510778-0, price (hardbound), \$74.50.

Elephants are perhaps the most recognized of the charismatic megafauna, and studies of these animals have broad appeal to both scientists and the general public. In *Living Elephants*, Raman Sukumar sought to provide a broad synthesis of elephant biology within the framework of modern evolutionary