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Review of *The Bats of Texas* by David J. Schmidley

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The Bats of Texas. David J. Schmidley. College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 1991. xv + 188 pp. Maps, photos, drawings, and references \$34.50 cloth, \$19.95 paper (ISBN 0-89096-405-5).

There are few “Bats of” books for states because usually there are not that many species located in a particular state and second, we often do not

have much information about the bats in a particular place or state. But there has been increasing interest in bats in the last few years stimulated by organizations like Bat Conservation International and publications like *Bats of Carlsbad Caverns*, both of which have high quality photographs of bats. The Carlsbad publication has particularly spectacular pictures of bats in flight.

The *Bats of Texas* by David Schmidley is a straightforward, well-done, and well-illustrated account of bats in the vast southern region known as Texas. There are 32 species representing four families of bats, three of which are more abundant in subtropical and tropical parts of this hemisphere. As a result there is interesting diversity in Texas bats. Second, much research into the biology of bats has been done in Texas. The Mexican free-tailed bat has vast nursery colonies there in the summer, greater than the concentrations of this bat at Carlsbad, and many mammalogists and their students located at Texas universities have been working on this bat and the other native species for many years. Schmidley has capitalized on both aspects to present the natural history of a fascinating group of mammals that usually gets a bum rap in the press. The author's 30 page introduction is very clear, well-written, and filled with information. Anyone who is the least bit curious about these maligned mammals should read it. The species accounts clearly show in what counties of the state which species have been taken and contain excellent paragraphs on life history. The book is geared for the educated layman but will be helpful to specialists as well where much information has been concentrated in one place.

I had only a few complaints about the book. One is that there has been a good bit more food habit data for bats in the U.S. since the late 1970s and early 1980s. One particularly interesting note that could have been added here is that the pallid bat, *Antrozous pallidus*, has now been observed going to the ground to eat not only insects but also small pocket mice of the genus *Perognathus*.

Each account refers to some of the 10 ecological regions that are shown in a map in the preface (Fig. 1, pg. xiii). These regions are numbered on the map without the corresponding names, which are mentioned in text, e.g., Pineywoods and Trans-Pecos regions. However, with a little sleuthing, one comes across Table 4 on page 10 that lists the regions by name but not by number. The first one is Pineywoods and the last is Trans-Pecos. I assume these are in order and Pineywoods = #1 on the map and Trans-Pecos is #10. It also would have been helpful to have the major geographical landmarks like rivers and mountains shown on some map. I was okay until I reached

Balcones Escarpment, a feature with which I was not familiar and could not locate easily.

The drawings by Christine Stetter are quite appealing and clearly show many of the features in question when identifying different species. Two measurements, length of forearm (FA, pg. 34) and maxillary tooth row (MXTR, pg. 45) are misleading. Most mammalogists take these as greatest lengths that are parallel to the length of the forearm or toothrow and not at an oblique angle as is illustrated. One last minor technical comment is that the family Phyllostomatidae is now more commonly referred to as the family Phyllostomidae.

This is a good book with excellent text, drawings, and photographs. The paperback is reasonably priced at \$20 and I would recommend it to scientist and layman alike, the latter who may be recently introduced to and intrigued by bats. One in every four mammals on earth is a bat, but since bats time-shift, we two-legged daytime mammals do not see them much. Bats have bizarre, interesting faces and are extremely beneficial animals. This book will show some of those faces and tell you why they are good. **Patricia W. Freeman**, *Curator of Zoology, University of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln, NE.*