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## Review of *Texas Natural History: A Century of Change* By David J. Schmidly

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*Dallas Museum of Natural History*

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**Texas Natural History: A Century of Change.** By David J. Schmidly. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2002. xiv + 534 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendix, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, a team of naturalists ventured out across the state of Texas to capture, identify, and record as many species of wildlife as they could find. Under the direction of Vernon Bailey, they spent more than 2,100 days in Texas between 1889 and 1906 sampling each of the state's ten ecological regions. Their efforts were part of a nation-wide survey sponsored by the Department of Agriculture.

Bailey's 1905 summary of the team's findings, *North American Fauna No. 25: Biological Survey of Texas*, has served as a standard reference on Texas mammals for almost a century. Long out of print and its contents inaccessible to the general public, Bailey's report now appears again in its entirety in David Schmidly's *Texas Natural History: A Century of Change*.

Had the author simply reprinted the earlier work, he would have performed a valuable service. Schmidly, however, includes dozens of never-be-

fore-published photographs taken during the survey, many of which show how parts of Texas looked prior to significant human impact, along with numerous previously unpublished descriptions of the land. He also offers biographical sketches of the survey's naturalists, a brief history of the Biological Survey, and a discussion of the development of mammalogy as a scientific discipline in Texas.

But *Texas Natural History: A Century of Change*—as the title implies—is more than a history book. Schmidly uses Bailey's report as a baseline against which to evaluate the changes that have occurred in Texas during the twentieth century. Starting with Bailey's accounts of species, he provides annotated commentary on each species's current taxonomic and ecological status and examines as well the changes in land use and the landscape itself over the past hundred years. He also details the changes that have taken place in the state's mammalian fauna during that time, describing those species that have been both lost and gained.

Looking to the future, Schmidly examines the challenges the state will face in the twenty-first century, such as water management and land fragmentation, conservation education and landowner participation, regional planning, and global warming, and recommends courses of action to help meet these challenges and maintain Texas's natural heritage for future generations.

*Texas Natural History: A Century of Change* is an important book, both for its historical perspectives and its modern perceptions. It will be a valuable resource for biologists, land and resource managers, and anyone interested in the natural history of Texas. **Brian Barnette**, *Chief Naturalist, Dallas Museum of Natural History*.