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## Review of *Great Wildlife of the Great Plains* By Paul Johnsgard

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**Great Wildlife of the Great Plains.** By Paul A. Johnsgard. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003. xv + 309 pp. Maps, line drawings, glossary, references, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Few authors have done more to increase awareness of the history, ecology, and inhabitants of the Great Plains than Paul Johnsgard. *Great Wildlife of the Great Plains* follows in the tradition of Johnsgard's *Birds of the Great Plains: Breeding Species and Their Distribution* (1979), *Prairie Birds: Fragile Splendor in the Great Plains* (2001), and *Faces of the Great Plains: Prairie Wildlife* (2003). In *Great Wildlife of the Great Plains*, Johnsgard focuses on some of the most notable and characteristic terrestrial species in the region as well as additional species of conservation concern: 121 total species including 74 birds, 28 mammals, and 19 reptiles and amphibians. The book is written in essay style, accessible to the amateur naturalist but useful for researchers also. References are not cited in the text but included at the end. The same is true of scientific names, allowing the prose to flow smoothly without cluttering the page with parenthetical material.

Johnsgard begins with a description of the major physiographic regions of the Great Plains, accompanied by maps showing their locations (chapter 1). Species are then grouped by the vegetative community most associated with them and discussed within a broader discourse of that habitat as a whole (chapters 2 through 9). Species descriptions are not intended to detail all aspects of natural history. Instead, the essays focus on interesting facts and behaviors of each species as well as adaptations for its particular lifestyle that tie it to one habitat or another. In the concluding chapters, Johnsgard discusses changes to wildlife in the Great Plains as a result of human settlement (chapter 10) and migratory and transient species in the region (chapter 11), then issues a call for conservation efforts in an essay entitled "What Is Still So Great about the Great Plains?" (chapter 12). The appendices include line drawings of field marks of some species (especially footprints); a list of nature preserves and natural areas found in the region; complete taxonomic lists of all birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians of the Great Plains states; a glossary; references; and a species index.

My criticisms are minor and focus on the figures. The maps, while useful, are busy and could have been more clear. The line drawings in the text are effective, but more impressive for birds than for mammals, reptiles, or amphibians. It should be noted, however, that this is not a field guide; the book's drawings are adequate for their intended function. Overall, Johnsgard has produced an enjoyable, well-written volume. It isn't difficult to understand his love and fascination for this region and the species found there. I would recommend *Great Wildlife of the Great Plains* highly to anyone living in or thinking of visiting the area or to readers who simply enjoy good books about the natural world's wonders. **Gregory A. Smith**, *Department of Biological Sciences, Emporia State University*.