

BOOK RECEIVED

J. Niethammer, F. Krapp (Editors): Handbuch der Säugetiere Europas. Band 2/I. Nagetiere II. Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, Wiesbaden, 1982, 649 pp. Price 328 DM.

Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft have recently published the second volume of Handbuch der Säugetiere Europas, containing the conclusion of the description of the order *Rodentia*, which began with the description of the first four families in volume I, published in 1978. The whole work consists of 5 volumes: *Rodentia* (vol 1 and 2/I), *Artiodactyla* 2/II, *Insectivora*, *Leporinae* and *Primates* 1/3, *Chiroptera* 1/4 and *Carnivora* 1/5. The editors of the whole series Professor Niethammer and Dr. F. Krapp — have omitted marine mammals (*Pinnipedia* and *Cetacea*) and *Perissodactyla*, limiting themselves to the forms occurring contemporaneously in Europe or which have disappeared during the last 50 years. The range of European territory in the maps, included to illustrate the distribution of species, covers the whole western and central part of the continent and the western part of the European territory of the Soviet Union. Information on given species includes: a description of diagnostic characters, biometric description together with an analysis of characters variations, distribution (in the case of a limited range its boundaries are given on the basis of extreme sites) and a list of *terrae typicae* for sub-species, origin of the species based on paleontological data, ecology (the habitat in which the species lives, its food, reproduction and population dynamics), and also postnatal development and the main characteristic of its behaviour. The section dealing with each species ends with a list of the publications referred to in the text. The various species have been dealt with either by individual authors, or groups of authors. The volume reviewed includes the following families: *Cricetidae*, *Arvicolidae*, *Zapodidae*, *Spalacidae*, *Hystriidae* and *Capromyidae*, and forms the work of 17 authors from many European countries.

Great credit is due to the editors for maintaining a high degree of uniformity in the lay-out of the sections, while retaining concise text. The proportion of space given to descriptions of species corresponds in the main to the factual proportion of the range of existing information, taking into consideration most recent literature. The excellent selection of basic bibliography, usually referred to in the general selection of literature at the end of each volume, deserves special emphasis in relation to the discerning use made of theriological literature. The lengthy list of authors has enabled the editors to use to good purpose regional literature, particularly that of the Balkan and Scandinavian countries and area of Eastern Europe. The hard binding and outstandingly wellplanned format complement the value of the work itself, which fully merits a place in the library of every theriological research centre. The whole set of "Handbuch der Säugetiere Europas", together with the supplement printed in 1981 devoted to "Threatened mammals in Europe", will for many years provide a valuable compendium of knowledge on the terrestrial mammals of Europe. The monographic treatment of the subject will undoubtedly act as a stimulus to research in those European countries which have not yet reached the stage of concluding research on their own theriofauna by modern monographic studies.

Jan Raczynski