

BOOK REVIEW

**Mammals of Algeria**

Mammals of Algeria. K. Kowalski and B. Rzebik-Kowalska. Ossolineum – Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków, 1991. 370 pp.; index ISBN 83-04-03706-8 pk.

Two Polish mammalogists – professor K. Kowalski and his wife – Dr Barbara Rzebik-Kowalska, members of the scientific staff of the Institute of Systematics and Evolution of Animals, Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow, resided in Algeria for five years, lecturing at the Oran University. The book is the result of their research project which was aimed at investigating mammal fauna of Algeria.

The basic material for the monograph include original materials and field observations. They collected a relatively large series of mammals from nearly the entire country. This includes more than 4000 individual mammals from owl pellets originating at 49 localities, and about 1500 specimens from trappings and earlier published or unpublished materials contained in zoological collections. They also scrutinized the whole relevant literature.

The monograph is organized in seven chapters. After an introduction, a brief account of the history of mammalogical research in Algeria is given. This is followed by a comprehensive description of the evolution of mammal fauna and an account of fossil records of Algerian mammals. The zoogeography section contains the summary of mammal fauna of Algeria, which includes 107 species, of which 11 are marine, and 4 are introduced by man. Thirteen species have become extinct since Antiquity. The largest part is a systematic list with each organism defined to the species level, and covers representatives of 12 orders. For each species a general description of its range in Algeria is given. This is followed by the list of original records. After this, other records are listed, standard measurements and other morphology data are given, as are taxonomic notes and remarks on ecology and conservation status. Only observations made in Algeria are included, and are not supplemented by data from other regions. Distribution of particular species is illustrated by a map, which shows the source of data and original records. The book is supplemented by a list of species erroneously recorded for Algeria, the list of taxa first described from this country, and exhaustive bibliography, which covers publications (more than 600) up to 1989. The gazetteer contains a list of all localities mentioned with geographical coordinates.

It is worth noting, that Algeria does not own any mammalogical collections. Those made for this book are housed in Cracow at the Institute of Systematics and Evolution of Animals, and some specimens are deposited in the Harrison Zoological Museum in Sevenoaks (England).

This is the most comprehensive and up-to-date book on mammal fauna of Algeria. It also is an essential source of information on the mammals of the Mediterranean and Saharan Africa. It is very competent review of Algerian mammals and their history, and can serve as a basic step for more advanced study of mammals of this second largest African country.

Zdzisław PUCEK, Mammal Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences, 17-230 Białowieża, Poland