



Buchbesprechung

QUMSIYEH, M. B.: **Mammals of the Holy Land**. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press 1996. 389 pp., 72 black and white photographs, 43 maps, hard cover. Price \$ 35,-. ISBN 0-89672-364-X.

This book deals with the mammals of Israel and the western part of Jordan, i.e., an area between latitudes 29° and 34° N and longitudes 34° and 38° E. The author, born in the Holy Land and presently working at Duke University in the United States, gives a concise introduction into the mammalian fauna of an area in the border zone between Asia and Africa.

After a short introduction and an account of the historical development of mammal research in the Holy Land, the author makes short remarks on the study of mammals in general, deals with "Mammalian evolution and human history", discusses different mammalian adaptations and the interrelationship between mammalian parasites and human health and introduces the reader to the geography and ecology of the Holy Land. After remarks on the zoogeography of mammals and aspects of conservation, the most extensive part of the book from page 59 through 316 deals with a synopsis of the mammals of the Holy Land.

For eight mammalian orders a short introduction is given and a dichotomous key allows the determination of genera within mammalian families. Subsequently, the mammalian species that live in the considered geographical area are described. First the original descriptions and synonyms are cited, followed by a diagnosis. An account of the geographical range of the different species is illustrated by a distribution map. The local status is characterized and information on the biology of the respective species is given. Under the heading "Genetics" information on the karyotype is supplied. The final section "Human interactions" supplies information on names given to species by the local inhabitants, as well as the significance of the mammalian species in rural medicine and folklore. The description of many of the considered species includes black and white photos. The quality of printing of these half-tone illustrations is generally poor, i.e., in most cases very dark. This reduces the information drastically that was originally intended by inclusion of the photos.

Following the major part of the book, it continues with short notes on introduced and domesticated mammals, a compilation of scientific terms in a glossary, thirty pages of references and an appendix listing localities with their geographical coordinates. Because of the difficulties in transcription of both Arabic and Hebrew names into English, many localities are represented by more than one name or spelling. Finally, a detailed index of more than 12 pages concludes this book, which will certainly be of great help to those visitors of the Holy Land who are interested in the mammalian fauna of this area.

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