

book review

Mammals in Hawai'i; A Synopsis and Notational Bibliography. Second edition. Bishop Museum special publication 76. Bishop Museum Press, Honolulu. 375 pp. P.Q. Tomich. 1986. \$42.95.

This welcome revision of the standard reference on mammals in Hawai'i comes to us 16 years after the 238-page initial version. The topics remain the same, but with important differences in emphasis. Most notable is the expanded treatment of marine mammals (about 12% vs 5% of the earlier content). The annotated bibliography of 1,500 entries comprises about 43% of the book (vs 36% previously). Species accounts are about the same as in the initial edition (41% vs 43%). The introduction, a checklist, an index, and a section on perspectives in Hawaiian mammalogy, make up the rest of the volume.

The mammals of Hawai'i now include 1 volant (the Hawaiian bat), 2 marine littoral species (the northern elephant seal from Midway Islands has been added), 22 pelagic mammals (whales), and 19 terrestrial species, for a total of 44. The 19 terrestrial species were all brought to Hawai'i by man; the book treats strongly of things Hawaiian which have been lost because of the introductions. The author's introduction deals passionately with Hawaiian environments today and should be read by legislators, teachers, bureaucrats, developers, conservationists, and all who make decisions by default or ignorance. Elsewhere (p. 190), the view of mankind becomes fatalistic: "It is the nature of man to exploit his surroundings for economic or other gain, to ignore wisdom of the past, and to fail to recognize the extreme vulnerability to disturbance that is characteristic of island biotic communities." I would rather hope that the dedication, scholarship, and efforts by individuals such as Tomich will prove Hawai'i an example of how things can be done with future generations in mind.

The book contains fair to excellent black and white photographs, a map of the Hawaiian chain, and sketches of whales (with a petroglyph man for scale). I was pleased to see that the author adopted the word "alien" in this edition, rather than "exotic" as in the first edition. It is an appropriately negative term. Further, I wish that the use of Hawaiian names for introduced species (p. 170-171) could be discontinued. Alien species do not belong with things Hawaiian, even words. The detailed treatment of many topics makes it difficult for less interested readers to quickly extract general information. Other sources for this level of knowledge (e.g. van Riper and van Riper 1982), would make a good companion.

Unfortunately, the time involved in the mechanics of publication and the considerable research and management activity in Hawai'i at present, have resulted in some species treatments being less up to date than others. The information on pigs, goats, rats, and mongooses does not reflect important recent research. References to efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Nature Conservancy, the National Park Service, and the State of Hawai'i need more emphasis and provide evidence that progress, although slow, is occurring.

Quentin Tomich's book should stand for years as a definitive reference to mammals in Hawai'i and an important source of conservation history for those who wish to learn and to avoid the mistakes of the past.

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