



Review

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REVIEWS AND COMMENTS

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA. By James R. Dixon. Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, Science Series 23, Zoology No. 10, pp. 64, 10 figs, 61 photos. \$2.25.—With its large herpetofauna (15 amphibian, 47 reptilian species) and extensive habitat diversity, Los Angeles County is unique among American metropolitan areas. Through the use of a simplified key, well chosen photographs, and concise descriptive accounts, Dr. Dixon has succeeded in producing an attractive and useful guide to this fauna for the layman and student. Directions for collection and preservation and a list of more advanced references are included. Physiographic and vegetation maps add to the utility of the volume. John Werler's earlier published statements on snake bite first aid are quoted, and local emergency telephone numbers are given.

Some of the diagrams illustrating identification characters are rather crudely constructed and not all of the photographs are of similar quality. No errors of substance were noted, but some misleading statements and incomplete explanations are presented. For example, reference to "color phases" in *Ensatina* leaves the impression that these occur in a single population. Indiscriminate collecting of amphibians and reptiles increases yearly in southern California, and it is unfortunate that Dr. Dixon did not present any pleas for conservation in this publication for laymen.—DAVID B. WAKE, Department of Anatomy, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

A LIST OF THE WORLD'S RECENT AND FOSSIL SALAMANDERS by Arden H. Brame, Jr. Herpeton 2(1):1-26. 1967. \$0.50.—This list has been substantially revised and updated from Brame's list mimeographed and distributed 10 years ago. The present paper recognizes four suborders, eight families, 54 genera, 302 species, 440 species and subspecies of living salamanders, and 76 species of fossil salamanders. The list contains only the name of each taxon, with author and date of original description, and

a short notation of geographic range. Brame mentions the pending synonymization of 10 living species and the imminent description of 30 recent and 11 fossil forms as new taxa. This publication is obtainable from the Southwestern Herpetologists Society, P.O. Box 2054-D, Pasadena, California 91105.

PHYLOGENETIC SYSTEMATICS. By Willi Hennig. Univ. of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1966, 263 pp. Translated by D. D. Davis and R. Zangerl. \$12.50.—Hennig's book, "Grundzüge einer Theorie der Phylogenetischen Systematik," was originally published in 1950. This translation was taken from an "extensively revised" manuscript, which has not yet appeared in the original German. D. Dwight Davis did the first rough translation, and began the editing before his untimely death, after which Rainer Zangerl assumed responsibility for final polishing and seeing the work through the press.

It seems to me that this book is characterized by the ease with which Hennig makes comparatively simple concepts sound difficult. This may in part be due to translation, which apparently duplicates with great fidelity the tortuous nature of the original German sentences. The translators, one a paleontologist and the other a comparative anatomist, may have felt that Hennig's prose was sufficiently clear so that they need not attempt to improve on it, or may have felt that the deficiencies in their personal familiarity with neontological systematics prevented them from making extensive revisions while still retaining Hennig's meanings. Thus, Zangerl apologizes in the preface for the linguistic difficulties involved in translating German "concepts" for which there are no English equivalents. I think it most unlikely that there are *concepts* that are unique and intelligible only in the German language, even though the word used in German to express that concept is not directly translatable. While Zangerl uses a *literal* (and thus linguistically defensible) translation of "Gesetzmassigkeit," he then adds that his translation does not mean the same thing as the original in every case. It