

Book Review

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Book Review

Grimmberger E.: Die Säugetiere Deutschlands. Beobachten und Bestimmen. *Quelle & Mayer Verlag, Wiebelsheim, 2014, 561 pp. ISBN: 978-3-494-01539-2.*

The book by Dr. Grimmberger, a neurologist by profession, looks like a field guide to the mammals of the present German territory. Yet it is more than that. In addition to the detailed description of mammalian species it affords many data on their distribution, biology, habitats, conservation and on mammalian orders and families living in Germany and observed in its shore seas. By the number of 1064 colour photographs it is perhaps the best photographically documented guide to mammals of that extent (561 pp.) and size (18 × 11 cm) in the world. The book starts by general information on mammals, their scientific nomenclature, methods of study (not only field methods but essentials of laboratory investigations as well), the relation of mammals to humans, protection of mammals and details of how to use the book, including necessary explanatory notes. In this and the following sections of the book, all measurements, descriptions of body parts, skulls, dentitions, etc., are documented by photographs. High quality photos concern individual mammals including their young, groups of mammals in their habitats and details of where and how these animals live. The core of the book, 464 pages, is represented by the chapter on 103 native, wild living mammal species (*Heimische, wild lebende Säugetiere*). The number of species per orders is as follows: Erinaceomorpha 2, Soricomorpha 10, Chiroptera 25, Lagomorpha 3, Rodentia 31, Carnivora 18, Perissodactyla 1, Artiodactyla 11 and

Cetacea 2. Each order, family and genus is briefly described. In every species, details are given on their measurements, appearance, similar species, distribution, habitats and biology, and preservation. The last paragraph concerns various notes referring to the respective scientific and/or German name, methods of observation, etc. Minor part of the book, 44 pages, applies to stray or potentially stray species, species escaped from captivity and some domestic mammals that have been kept to preserve the landscape, such as sheep and goats (*Landschaftspfleger*).

I have very few critical comments. A paper by Stubbe (2011) quoted as a reference on p. 264 is missing in the list, pp. 542-545. The text to the photo of the European mink (*Mustela lutreola*) on p. 417 is a little bit confused. It is a question if the wild horse (*Equus ferus*) can be placed among native, wild living mammals, pp. 440-443. There are only 35 distribution maps in the book, thus in a minor part of species. Of course, such maps are unnecessary in species with general distribution throughout the country like is the common mole (*Talpa europaea*) or the common vole (*Microtus arvalis*). There are, however, rare and marginally distributed mammals and, in some of them, the respective maps are missing (e.g., *Erinaceus roumanicus*, *Myotis alcathoe*, *Lepus timidus*, *Arvicola scherman*, *Microtus bavaricus*). Within the book, such drawbacks are unimportant and do not impair its quality. To sum up, the book by E. Grimmberger is an invaluable reference source to the observation, identification and general knowledge of Central European mammals. It can be recommended to all students of mammals, not only in Europe, both beginners and advanced, amateurs and professionals.

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