

An introduction discusses the definition of the region and its included mammal fauna and divides the area into six subdivisions (most with further subdivisions) based on their mammal composition. The processes of assigning available material to a classification in line with current nomenclatural practice are also discussed. In undertaking such a wide ranging review, the authors have tended to accept an existing view where available; nevertheless, it is somewhat surprising that only two new names are proposed and only 14 'original, unpublished or unorthodox' nomenclatural combinations are highlighted.

The main body of the book is the systematic account. Species accounts give synonymy, range (mostly also included in maps), variation and remarks on systematics and status. It is not a field guide, but there are keys or identification tables for most genera and species and for the higher taxa. The bats (307 species) were compiled by Hill, the rest by Corbet. Six appendices include a simple check list of species and mini biographies of all those who have made important contributions to mammal studies in the area. There is a bibliography of 3000 references.

While of obvious importance in understanding the fauna of the region, conservation does not figure in the volume, except that CITES and IUCN red list categories are included where appropriate. Thus Mammals of the Indomalayan Region is not a conservation book, but will doubtless be a key reference for years to come. There naturally remain many mysteries about the status and distribution of specimens and species and the authors have clearly had to make decisions between conflicting opinions on

classifications, but this review is much needed and will be widely welcomed.

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The Bat Conservation Trust

Wild Pigs of the United States: Their History, Morphology and Current Status by John J. Mayer and I. Lehr Brisbin Jr (University of Georgia Press, 1991, ISBN 0 8203 1239 8, 313 pp., HB \$40)

More than 30 exotic mammal species have become naturalized in the United States since the earliest European colonial settlements were established nearly half a millennia ago. Pigs were amongst the first of these exotics to establish free-ranging populations and, with various recent estimates of between 0.5 and 2 million wild individuals ranging through at least 16 states, they are now among the most abundant and widely distributed of all introduced forms. Being both adaptable and prolific they are also among the most aggressive and destructive of these exotics, and they are regarded by most US agencies, land managers and environmental interest groups as a nuisance, if not a major environmental pest. Contrarily, they have long been a coveted target of recreational hunters and game meat producers, many of whom (along with a few equally irresponsible landowners) have actively facilitated their spread through deliberate or careless releases of founder stocks.

The authors have chosen not to explore the issues and concerns relating to these releases and the continuing expansion of many of the wild populations of these animals. Rather, they have painstakingly traced and documented the history of the releases, the present distri-

bution and (legal) status of the descendant pigs in each union state, and the origins, affinities and morphology of the various introduced stocks, which they have attempted to distinguish (somewhat unsatisfactorily) as 'European wild boar', 'feral hogs' and 'wild boar × feral hybrids'. While all this is manifest in the title, and a worthwhile exercise in itself, the resulting text is unfortunately far too long and is tortuously exacting in its detail and analyses. Moreover, by concentrating on the least contentious (and in some ways least interesting) aspects of these introductions they have not only omitted discussion of most of the topical issues, but have failed to develop any really useful conclusions or recommendations about the future management of these animals.

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ECOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMICS

The Balance of Nature? Ecological Issues in the Conservation of Species and Communities by Stuart L. Pimm (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1992, ISBN 0 226 66830 4, 434 pp., SB £21.50/\$26.95)

This important, interesting and readable book addresses 'scientific issues in conservation biology'. Stuart Pimm is concerned about the 'impending catastrophe' of extinctions and in this book examines what we know about the stability of populations and natural communities. Stability is reduced to a number