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REVIEWS

Tennant, Alan

THE BATS OF TEXAS

David J. Schmidly

Texas A&M University Press, 1991

188 pgs., \$19.95 (softcover)

Among the growing number of books about Texas wildlife, David J. Schmidly's *The Bats of Texas* fills an important, and previously unoccupied, niche. It is also a major accomplishment. Since all but 11 of the bat species found in the United States occur in Texas, the book is applicable far beyond this state's borders.

Schmidly, a professor of mammalogy at Texas A&M University and one of the directors of the new International Center for Bat Research and Education partnership between A&M and Bat Conservation International, has succeeded in producing a book of scientific stature in a popular format. His introduction provides the general reader a thorough walk-through on flying mammals. How bats differ from, and are similar to, other mammals, as well as bats' lifestyles, ecological roles, and their complex relation with humans are some of Schmidly's initial topics.

Then the book becomes more scientific. Using Christine Steller's precise line drawings of wings, ears, digital arrangement, and even skull and dental configuration, an elaborate key greatly simplifies identifying any of the 32 bat species found in the state. Eighteen striking color photographs by BCI Director Merlin Tuttle and John L. Tveten contribute to this process. Finally, thoroughly documented individual accounts for each species provide descriptive details, distribution, food preference, and habitat. --Alan Tennant

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