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New Book Reviews



Bats: Biology and Behaviour

By John D. Altringham

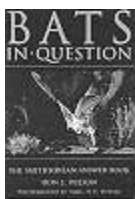
Oxford University Press, 1996. Hardcover. 262 pages

\$75.00, Available in Fall 1997 BCI catalogue.

In his new book, *Bats: Biology and Behaviour*, Dr. John D. Altringham skillfully summarizes many of the most fascinating traits of bats, at the same time providing exceptional lessons in mammalian adaptation, co-evolution, and systematics. Drawing from 445 references, the book's eight chapters cover bat evolution, flight, echolocation, torpor and hibernation, reproduction and development, behavior, community ecology, and conservation. The information is accurately annotated with line drawings and illustrations, compiled in such a way that scientists, students, wildlife professionals, or bat enthusiasts will find it to be not only interesting reading but an invaluable reference. This book is an excellent investment for any natural history library.

Altringham, a longtime BCI member, holds a senior academic post studying comparative physiology at the University of Leeds in England. His extensive studies of bats include ecology, behavior, and the biomechanics of locomotion.

--Brian Keeley



Bats in Question: The Smithsonian Answer Book

By Don E. Wilson, Photos by Merlin D. Tuttle

Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997. Softcover. 168 pages

\$24.95, Available in Fall 1997 BCI catalogue

As a bat biologist, I'm always looking for bat books to recommend to interested acquaintances and to put on my shelf of favorites. Dr. Don Wilson's new book, *Bats in Question*, is just such a book.

Wilson, a BCI Scientific Advisor, is Director of Biodiversity Programs at the Smithsonian. His extensive knowledge of bat literature and his acquaintance with most of the leading bat researchers are key factors in making this a thorough treatise on bats. And yet he has written in a question-and-answer style that is accessible for all levels of readers. The appealing layout invites you to jump in under any of the many interesting topics such as: when did bats evolve; what characterizes the major groups of bats; are bats a threat to

humans; what should I do if I find a sick bat; and how can I become a bat biologist? Throughout the book, Wilson weaves in tales of his field research in a way that makes you feel you are having a conversation with him or attending a spirited lecture.

In addition, more than 130 of Merlin Tuttle's photos have been worked into the text unusually well, helping readers understand key concepts. Tuttle's pictures have rich color and dramatic action, providing the kind of illustration quality usually only seen in coffee-table books.

Some other key features in Wilson's book include two different bibliographies and indexes and a 20-page chart of 925 bat species with the conservation status of each. This book will be on my shelf of favorite references for a long time to come.

--John Bowles

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