

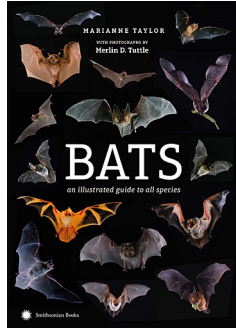
Bats: An Illustrated Guide to All Species

By Marianne Taylor. Photography by Merlin D. Tuttle. 2018. Smithsonian Books. 400 pages, 39.95 CAD, Cloth.

Part lavishly illustrated desk-top field guide, part coffee table book, this stunning hardcover is a triumph of production quality. From the cover through to the index, this book has the look and feel of a text three times its price. Not only do the colour saturation and satisfying weight of paper stock do justice to the incredible images, the book is intuitively organized and rendered in exquisite detail.

Starting with a well written and accessible 50-page introduction section that offers an overview of everything from evolution, diversity, and biology to behaviour and bat-human relationships, the bulk of this book is in the species descriptions, organized by suborder, family, and species. As advertised, it covers the 1384 currently recognized bat species of the world, following the 2018 bat taxonomic review by Simmons and Cirranello (2019). Each species is represented by at least a portrait, as well as its distribution (details and map), physical description, and a few interesting facts. The length, weight, and IUCN status of each species is also provided.

Although lacking a species key and not designed as a true field guide, the level of detail in the family and genus descriptions is more reminiscent of a textbook than a popular science entry. While Taylor largely avoids jargon throughout, the long-form descriptions interspersed between the species accounts do have a noticeably different tone. Casual readers will likely enjoy the more accessible Introduction section and enjoy the book as a curio for its beautiful photography and interesting facts. There is cer-



tainly enough here for those with a keener interest, but they will have to seek out further reading on their own as the book provides no citations for the information presented.

The highlight of this book is certainly the photography, much of which captures night-time scenes. The bat portraits are all the more impressive for the way they capture the likeness of their subject. It should be said that this is a good resource to win over the bat-fearing folk among us—aside from a handful of very unusual looking adaptations, bats are by and large endearing creatures and Tuttle captures them with remarkable skill. Taking charismatic photos that show a bat's natural expression (i.e., avoiding squinting eyes from a nocturnal animal exposed to flash) is not an easy task, but the night-time photography, and especially the action shots, in this book are simply unparalleled.

If the author's and photographer's objectives were to create a spectacular photo inventory of bat species, prefaced by interesting front matter and interspersed with highly detailed family and genus descriptions, they have met and exceeded their goals. The care, time, and effort put into this book are obvious. Dr. Tuttle has studied and photographed bats for 60 years, and his photo collection combined with Taylor's clear writing are what make this book possible. The result is a gorgeous, informative catalogue of species which absolutely deserves a place on your bookshelf.

Literature Cited

Simmons, N.B., and A.L. Cirranello. 2019. Bat Species of the world: a taxonomic and geographic database. Accessed 2 October 2019. <http://www.batnames.org>.

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