

Breed, B.; Ford, F.: Native Mice and Rats. Numerous Black And White Illustrations, 16 Colour Plates. CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood (2007). X & 185pp., Paperback, Austr.\$ 39.95, ISBN: 9780643091665

Australia is often believed to be the continent of marsupials and monotremes. This volume, however, makes clear that about 60 species of rodents also live on this continent, the Australian native mice and rats, all belonging to the subfamily Murinae. Australian subfamily members immigrated from south-east Asia at least four million years ago. House mice as well as black and brown rats were introduced to the continent by European immigrants just a little more than 200 years ago. On the other hand, the ancestors of modern monotremes and marsupials, as descendants of species living on the ancient Gondwana continent, have probably been in Australia for more than 100 million years.

The authors of this book differentiate the native mice and rats as “Australo-Papuan old endemics” and “Australo-Papuan new endemics”, the latter being represented by species of the genus *Rattus*. While the old endemics immigrated in the very late Miocene or early Pliocene, the new endemics arrived during the Pleistocene. Most of the species retained the generalized mouse-like morphology, but in a few species of “hopping mice” a specialized hind limb anatomy with lengthened tibia and fibula and very long metatarsals allows rapid bipedal locomotion.

It is certainly a disadvantage of this book that common names rather than Latin or scientific terms are used. The authors write themselves that more than one common name has been used for one and the same

species, or that one common name has been applied to an Australian species or one living elsewhere. A mix of common and scientific names might have been helpful for the reader. On the other hand, the reader will certainly appreciate the ample use of tables in the different chapters that present important information and allow easy interspecific comparisons.

What are the subjects dealt with in this interesting book? After an introductory chapter the authors inform with maps, line drawings and tables about the diversity of species, give information on the distribution of native rats and mice in Australia under special consideration of seven major geographical regions of the continent, in which distinct assemblages of species occur. Separate chapters inform about origin and evolution of native rodents, discuss the wide range of diets from crustaceans, insects or fish to an omnivorous food and even to material of plant origin eaten by strict herbivores. Anatomical aspects of the morphology of the gastrointestinal tract are also presented and questions on population biology and social behaviour are approached. In a special chapter Andrew Breed describes parasites and diseases of Australian rodents. In a concluding chapter the two main authors introduce the reader to problems related with conservation of the rodent fauna. This book about the rodents living “down under” is concluded by a glossary, 10 densely printed pages of references and a useful index.

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Baagøe, H.J.; Jensen, T.S.: Dansk Pattedyratlas. Numerous colour illustrations. Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag A/S (2007). 392 pp., Hardback, DKK 299.00 (approx. €40,-), ISBN-13: 978-87-02-05506-1

This atlas, published in the Danish language, deals with 88 mammalian species recorded in the wild in Denmark; only feral cats have not been considered. This volume, amply illustrated in colour, presents informative photos of the species and their biotopes, in some cases also diagrams and, representing the essence of this publication, highly informative maps that show the distribution of species in “Universal Transversal Mercator Projection” (UTM), with a grid of squares with a size of $10 \times 10 \text{ km}^2$. The distribution of Pinnipedia and Cetacea in Danish waters is depicted without application of the grid. A joint venture of the Zoological Museum in Copenhagen (director: H.J. Baagøe) and the

Natural Science Museum in Århus (T.S. Jensen) made this volume possible. The maps are primarily based on data collected between 2000 and 2003, which means that the reader can rely on a really up-to-date source of references. In addition to autochthonous species, this volume also includes those nine mammals that either immigrated into Denmark by themselves or were introduced by man, namely, three species each of rodents, carnivores and artiodactyls. Reference is also made to two rare vagrant species, namely, a Swedish elk or moose (*Alces alces*) that lived on the island of Zealand for 10 months, or the five different individuals of walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*) that have been observed in Danish waters since 1900.

It is an interesting aspect that—at least in one case—the highly developed Danish agricultural industry (“Danish bacon”) strongly influences attitudes towards a wild species: “Until now, free-living wild boars have