



MAMMALS OF SOUTH ASIA (VOL. I AND II)

Edited by Dr. A. J. T. Johnsingh and Dr. Nima Manjrekar
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Paperback, 766 pages in each volume.

This is not a field guide, so one should not expect the ease and concise nature of one, but it is definitely one that scientists, students and the layperson alike can use as a scientific guide and reference book. Over two volumes, the book covers the 574 known mammalian species found in south Asia, based on research and documentation available since 1947, as per the latest accepted taxonomic classification. It provides detailed information about natural history, conservation status, distribution, field identification, behaviour and population. The contributions of over 75 authors and experts make this book exceptional, as each writes about his or her area of expertise. The credentials of the writers are beyond reproach and several lesser-known species have been covered in detail, through direct contribution by the researching scientist. The editors, Dr. A. J. T. Johnsingh and Dr. Nima Manjrekar have commendably edited the vast scientific data into easy-to-read, interesting and informative text. A valuable reference book for students, the two volumes also include details about potential research projects.

This book truly has the potential to become an acceptable alternative to *The Book of Indian Animals* by S. H. Prater, which has been in print for more than half a century and is considered to be one of the most accessible and insightful works on Indian wildlife. A lot has changed between then and now in the animal kingdom. Distribution and population are key, but there are also visible changes in behavioural patterns due to proximity with humans. More in-depth studies have taken place thus giving us a better insight. All this has been achieved due to greater interest, education, ease of access and of course, technology. Taxonomic ranks and classifications have also undergone tremendous changes. This book is a new benchmark for mammals.

Reviewed by Gaurav Shirodkar