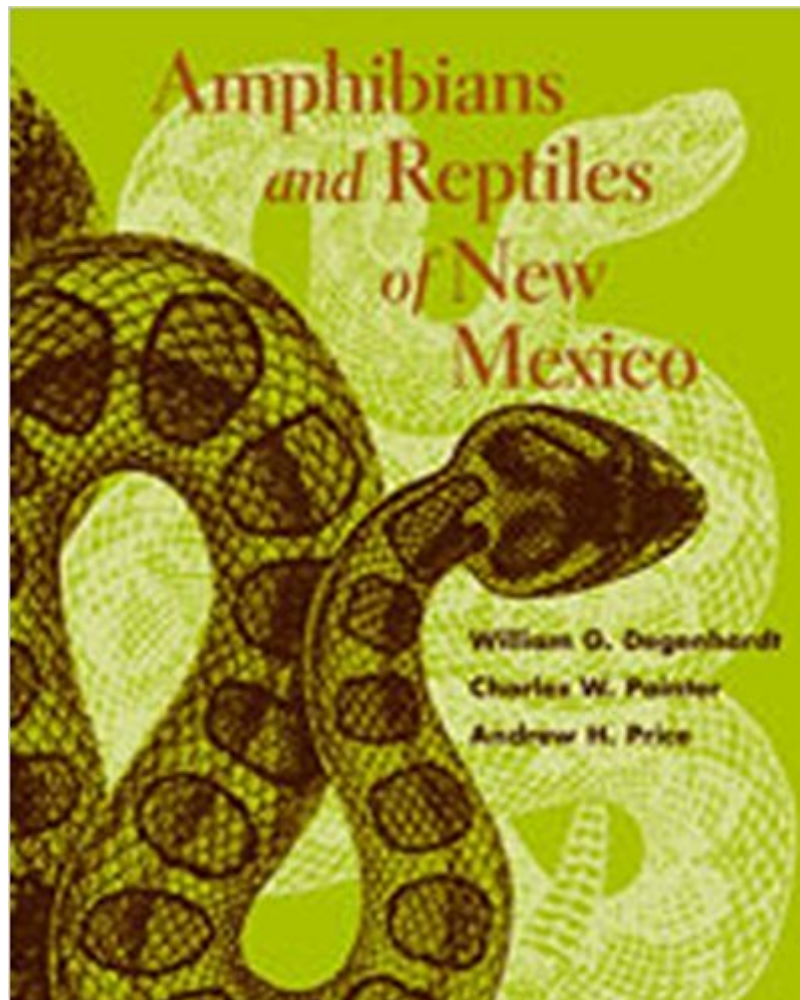




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Amphibians And Reptiles Of New Mexico



Synopsis

Amphibians and reptiles thrive in New Mexico's many landscapes and varied environments. In all, the state has 123 species, an assemblage of 3 salamanders, 23 frogs and toads, 10 turtles, 41 lizards, and 46 snakes. In this comprehensive guide, each species is presented in a color photograph and its distribution shown on a map. Technical art supplements, identification keys, and line art complement family descriptions. For each species, the following is provided: type, distribution, description, similar species, systematics, habitat, behavior, reproduction, food habits, and references. The detailed descriptions add to our knowledge about the region's herpetofauna, which will aid students, herpetologists, and resource managers. The book is also of great benefit to non-specialists, including casual hikers, since the authors write in accessible language that makes for easy identification of species.

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Customer Reviews

..."a top quality guide to the herpetofauna of New Mexico." "I heartily recommend this masterful compendium to anyone who cherishes the Land of Enchantment." . . . a tremendous value. It is truly a beautiful book, filled with detailed systematic, distribution, and life-history data, and complemented by excellent artwork, maps, and photographs. Both amateur and professional herpetologists should buy this book. . . . concise, well-written . . . an excellent book. . . . *It will be the standard reference for the New Mexico herpetofauna for many years.* "If you've been wondering what's hopping or slithering around your back yard or favorite hiking trail, this is the book for you. There are helpful

color photos, maps and drawings to aid in identification, along with a glossary, index and bibliography." . . . highly informative, . . . filled with important taxonomic and life history data and is an indispensable work on the herpetofauna of New Mexico, as well as an important addition to anyone having a vested interest in the southwestern United States.

The definitive reference source covering the 123 species of amphibians and reptiles found in New Mexico, including over 130 color plates and 100 maps.

This is superbly well done. There is a hardbound available-spring for it.

The book is exactly what I needed for upcoming environmental consulting work in New Mexico. It is an excellent technical reference book on the subject. It gives you all the systematics information as well as overall habitat descriptions, necessary to identifying the probability of encountering species in the field, during field and biological assessments for upcoming projects in the area.

Not a field guide but I have one for the truck anyway. The most comprehensive work on the amphibians and reptiles of New Mexico. Nice photos illustrate each taxon. Though the taxonomy is becoming dated as DNA becomes the standard taxonomic assignment, it is pretty easy to translate to the most current nomenclature on line.

It's a great book. Buy it. Only wish the photos were better. Otherwise excellent. Now I have to go her The Enchantment State!

This book is what I use to lookup reptiles that I see when I am outdoors.

Detailed information for the herps of NM. Excellent dichotomous keys. Highly recommended.

I'm viewing this book as someone who has had a casual interest in reptiles and amphibians since the sixth grade, sometimes amounting to an obsession, but never turning into anything much. I've never lived in a location in which I haven't made some attempt to collect, or at least observe, the indigenous reptiles and amphibians. The only surprises I've had were, once in northern New Jersey, finding a smooth brown snake (*Virginia valeriae*, the snake formerly known as *Haldea valeriae*) dead on the road, a rarity at the northern end of its range; and once at Nicosia Reservoir in Marin

County, California, turning over a piece of deadwood and finding some sort of dwarf rattlesnake (which must have represented a REAL isolated population). I should have killed that buzzing little bugger, with its head plates and tiny rattles, and taken it to someone at Berkeley but I couldn't bring myself to kill something I loved. The part of New Mexico I now live in seems almost sterile. I expected an abundance of herpetofauna. It's one of the chief reasons I moved here after my retirement. But, no. Whiptails abound, every one of them female. (I asked them about it and they disapprove of the arrangement). But in twelve years of searching I've found only four species of lizards, two snakes DOR, and no amphibians at all. Oh, and one pugnacious blind snake that I had to rescue from my cat. It's been a great disappointment. Whatever cosmic forces are at work, depriving me of this minor pleasure, they are probably the same ones that continually go about changing the nomenclature that I once took the trouble to memorize in great detail. Judging from this book, a comprehensive look at all the reptiles and amphibians in the state, including imports from Turkey, the forces are not only blending or distinguishing between species but juggling around genera as well. They've even fiddled around with the general lexicon. What was once a "prototype" is now called a "holotype". What was once a "juvenile" is now a "juvenal", and to hell with the Roman satirist. Will they stop at nothing? This isn't a cheap book or a field guide. The information provided is detailed enough to give a serious student a good grasp of what's going on in New Mexico, and a handle on what has gone on in the past. It's 430 pages long and has 123 splendid color plates. The text is organized by species. Subspecies are described in the text. For each species, the sections include Type, Distribution, Description, Similar Species, Systematics, Habitat, Behavior, Reproduction, Food Habits, and Remarks. It's hard to imagine a more useful book for a novice willing to face a bit of a challenge, or a more experienced herpetologist who wanted to refresh his familiarity with these small, often graceful, and sometimes quite beautiful little animals.

There are many, even myriad, good things about this book. However, there are a few things I did not like and which, if corrected in a future revision, could turn this book into a world beater in the field of herpetology. First the "bad" things: 1. This book needs a topo and political map or several. Places and physical features are constantly mentioned but, other than the tiny range maps associated with each species account, there is only one map at the front of the book which shows the counties and major cities, that is if you consider Animas and Hobbs to be major cities. 2. The glossary needs improvement. There are many terms which are used constantly which should be defined but are not. For instance, in one species account, a lizard is described as having scales which are "imbricate and mucronate." Just for kicks, I looked in the glossary. "Mucronate" is defined

- "imbricate" is not. 3. Find another way to arrange the "List of scientific and common plant names used in the text." There is no arrangement whatsoever to the list. Plants are listed alphabetically by genus under the family. However, the family names are haphazard. Thus, if one does not know the family name, one has to peruse the list from top to bottom to find the plant named in the text. Woe be unto the reader who doesn't know that *Helianthus* is in the family "Compositae," the last named family. Pardon me for saying this but it appears as if the authors used their college botany texts to research the family names. After years of not complying with nomenclatural convention, the botanists finally joined the world and changed family names to agree with convention. Thus, Compositae became Asteraceae and Gramineae became Poaceae, for example. Also, ALL plants mentioned should be listed, even aquatic plants. Plants are keys to finding reptiles and even subtle differences in plant denizens of a habitat may make a great deal of difference in the animals found there. NOW FOR THE GOOD STUFF The standard items are all found at the beginning of the book, e.g., Foreword, Preface, Acknowledgments followed by a concise Physiographic Sketch of New Mexico (Words, not pictures) which in no way can take the place of a good physical map of the state. One of the best features is a "Brief History of Herpetology in New Mexico" in which the authors give insight into the historical aspects of herpetology in the state. This theme is repeated in the text of the species accounts with interesting snippets of history intermixed with the drier facts of science. A checklist of NM herps is provided and this is where disagreements are going to arise. The authors utilize what some would consider "old" or "controversial nomenclature." However, if one reads the species accounts, all disputed uses of nomenclature are explained. Even though I disagree with some of the generic nomenclature used, the authors gave good and valid reasons for using what they did. There are good keys to all the major groups of herps in NM and they appear detailed enough to lead a novice to the right creature, as long as the scales are not imbricate. The species accounts are very well written except for the occasional typo - "then instead of than", for instance -and give loads of information. Virtually everything one would want to know about an animal is in here. The species accounts follow a format similar to the SSAR Catalogue species accounts and that is not at all bad. It might be good if a majority of this type of book were to follow a similar format. A very fine section of glossy photos is found in the midst of the species accounts. It seems that this is the way publishers are going to make books now so, take it or leave it. The photos, by the way, are arranged in the same manner as the text for fairly easy location. Degenhardt, et al, have compiled a magnificent bibliography with everything you ever wanted to know about New Mexico Herps and where to find it. The authors have years of experience in New Mexico herpetology and have used every one of those years in producing an outstanding volume.

It's a little large to carry out in the field but it is worth every penny and when in New Mexico, should be at least carried in the vehicle. This book would be a bargain at twice the price.

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