

Endangered and Threatened Animals of Florida and Their

Habitats by Chris Scott 2004. University of Texas Press, 448 pp., Hardcover. \$60.00 ISBN 1 - 57524-004-1.

Young Cage

It isn't often I have the pleasure and good luck to see an early edition of a wildlife book, and especially one written by one of our very own THS members. So it was with great anticipation that I opened and began reading Chris Scott's newest book, "Endangered and Threatened Animals of Florida and Their Habitats". I have known Chris for about four years and am familiar with his earlier book, "Snake Lover's Lifestory and Journal". I know of his work ethic, his passion for wildlife, and his knowledge and experience in Florida, having grown up there. All this came to mind as I began the book, and my anticipation was not disappointed.

First, a little about the book. It is 315 pages and is in both hardcover and paperback. It is published by the University of Texas Press in Austin. It is available from the University of Texas Press for \$60.00 hardcover, \$29.95 for paperback, somewhat less if ordered from Amazon. The included pictures are good.

The first half of the book is divided into four chapters, covering the problems faced by Florida's endangered and threatened animals (human encroachment and biological invasives, to mention a few), what is being done to help them, and a thorough rundown of the many different and unique habitats found in Florida, and their special problems.

The balance of the book covers individual species accounts, from Florida Mastiff Bats to Tree Snails; with good coverage of the herps for us scale lovers.

There is a glossary and a bibliography to help with both understanding references and to aid in further study.

Here are some of my evaluations of strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths:

Chris has very intimate and long term knowledge of Florida. He has been to these places, watched the changes, and knows many of the people involved in studying and protecting the remaining animals.

I really enjoyed the style of prose. His way with words flowed nicely, and made the reading very easy.

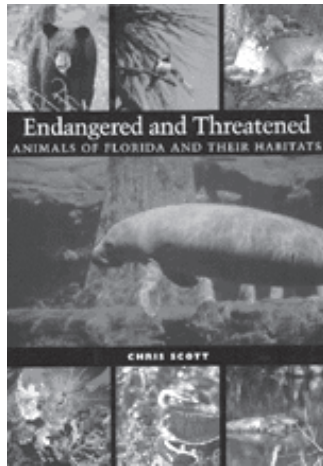
We are all very aware of "population explosion" issues. Sometime it is very difficult to picture the influx

of people, the numbers simply dull you. Chris used a very nice methodology to bring the point home. Progressively from 1830 to 2002 the influx of people changed the "acres per Florida resident" from 1000 acres to 2 acres! That is an explosion, and no wonder the wildlife has suffered so much.

The habitat descriptions are superb! Florida has such different and unique habitat, and Chris walks you thru them all. Most of us have spent time in Florida and to look back and revisit "Inland Peninsular Scrub" or "Tropical Hammocks" in the book was like being there all over again. Chris also covers much "habitat" that most of us probably have not spent much time in, for example "Tropical Coral Reef's". For me this extensive habitat coverage was easily the best part of the book.

Of course, hand in hand with this habitat coverage is the dangers and threats each faces and what if anything is being done to protect them.

Chris is an excellent Photographer and his pictures, as mentioned are good. I also thought Chris did a very nice job on the individual species account. It was for me very interesting to read of the Florida Panther, the Manatee, the Indigo Snake and so many others.



Weaknesses:

There is a mislabeled picture, the Short Tailed Snake, C-34, with no Brown Snake in sight. Very minor

I was not familiar with the word "electrophoretically", as used in determining species relationships, and would have liked to have found it in the Glossary.

I was disappointed that the Book was printed in China, and not on recycled paper. Guess this is the way of the world, but it sure is disappointing.

As you can see from my short and paltry weakness list that I really liked the book. If you have an interest in wildlife, or conservation, or Florida this book is a must! You will enjoy it. I consider it a reference book for my bookshelf. I look forward to Chris Scott's next book.

CS