

Book Review: Four Recent Handbooks for Turkey

Türkiye Amfibiliri. The Amphibians of Turkey by Necla Özeti and I. Yılmaz, 1994. İzmir, 219 pp., 40 col. photos in pls., 92 text-figs. (In Turkish with English summary).

Tükiye Omurglılari, Amfibiler edited by Ali Demirsoy, 1996. Meteksan; Ankara, vi + 69 pp., numerous maps and figs. (In Turkish).

Tükiye Omurglılari, Sürüngenler edited by Ali Demirsoy, 1996. Meteksan; Ankara, viii + 205 pp., numerous maps and figs. (In Turkish).

Turkish Herpetofauna (Amphibians and Reptiles) by Ibrahim Baran and Mehmet Atatür, 1998. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Environment; Ankara, x + 214 pp., 122 col. pls., 7 text-figs. (In English).

Until the publication of these books, the standard herpetological summary publications for Turkey had been Başoğlu and Özeti (1973) and Başoğlu and Baran (1977, 1980). The four handbooks reviewed here accompanied us on a recent herpetological expedition to western and southern Turkey. The combination of these references enabled us to quickly identify most species in the field.

Turkish Herpetofauna by Baran and Atatür has a color photograph of each species, illustrated keys, one paragraph each on identification, habitat, biology, and distribution. The distribution sections include brief statements of the overall distribution and the range within Turkey. Where subspecies are recognized, a short distribution statement is given for each. There is no descriptive differentiation of subspecies. There are no distribution maps. The color photographs are of good quality and usually enabled quick identification of live specimens. Photos and text are on glossy paper and this hardback book is sturdily bound. The bibliography includes 53 references, and while not exhaustive, serves as a good introduction to the herpetological literature of Turkey. The nomenclature is reasonably current, with the exception, of course, of changes (e.g. the break-up of *Eumeces* and *Coluber*) since its publication. It is the only one of these handbooks to include *Rana dalmatina* Schneider, Sinch, and Nevo, 1992. Of the four, this book got most use on the trip, particularly as it is in English.

The two paper-bound books edited by Demirsoy, **Tükiye Omurglılari, Amfibiler** and **Tükiye Omurglılari, Sürüngenler** are useful to Western herpetologists, in particular, because they have a distribution map for each species, usually accompanied by a black and white illustration, often a photograph, but sometimes one or more line drawings. Although the books

are printed on high quality stock, many of the photographs have not reproduced well.

The tabular format of species presentation is somewhat unusual and innovative. These tables are the same for each species and include Latin and Turkish names, the author, date; one or more illustrations; distribution map for Turkey, showing both range and spot localities; remarks on habitats, relationships, taxonomic status, etc.; conservation status (rare, endangered, vulnerable, widespread, etc.); overall distribution and range within Turkey; type locality; greatest size; morphological characteristics; color pattern; reproduction; time from hatching to maturity; conservation status of habitats; defense mechanisms; population densities; potential hazards; zoogeographic origins; and conservation proposals for the future. A table listing the fauna summarizes the global and Turkish distributions, zoogeographic source, presumed geological time of arrival in Turkey, biogeographic and conservation status, and special remarks.

The books also contain descriptions and comments on higher taxa for the general reader. The bibliographies are extensive, much more so than that of the Baran and Atatür handbook in English. Contributors to these volumes are prominent Turkish herpetologists: Varol Tok, Ibrahim Baran, Mehmet Atatür, Abidin Budak, and Mehmet Öz. These volumes are obviously designed for the serious Turkish zoology student or wildlife professional and should serve this purpose well. They appear to be part of a larger series covering the entire Turkish fauna. Subspecies are covered individually, although there are some strange inconsistencies: sometimes there is a separate table and map for the species as a whole, in addition to the subspecies accounts, and sometimes not. The usage of generic names is sometimes confusing, as for example: *Cyrtodactylus* (= *Cyrtopodion*) (*Mediodactylus*) *heterocercus* and *Agama* (= *Laudakia*) *stellio* so that it not clear which generic name is recognized by the authors. As I don't read Turkish, I can't comment on errors in the text. Some of the range maps may be too general, especially in those cases where spot distributions are not shown. For example, *Laudakia stellio* is shown to extend to broad contact with the Iranian border, whereas it has never been recorded for Iran. We used the maps of these volumes in conjunction with the photographs and English text of the Baran and Atatür book and this greatly facilitated our work.

Türkiye Amfibiliri. The Amphibians of Turkey by Özeti and Yılmaz is aimed primarily at Turkish zoology students and serves as an introduction to amphib-

iology. It is an update, or second edition of Başoğlu and Özeti (1973). The first chapter is an introduction to nomenclature, and in particular, to the taxonomy of the Turkish amphibian fauna. One chapter deals with the biology of amphibians in general, including morphology, reproduction, development, distribution, and folklore. Two subsequent chapters cover these topics in more detail, one for salamanders and one for frogs. These chapters are arranged by family and include families not found in Turkey. They include keys to the Turkish genera and species and spot locality maps. These maps are useful, if somewhat cluttered (several taxa per map); localities are numbered and named in the figure legends. Keys to the generic level for egg masses and larvae have been provided. The descriptions and discussions of morphology are accompanied by useful illustrations taken from several sources (not always attributed). There is a short chapter on methods and techniques, a glossary, and a bibliography of 181 references, including the most important technical papers for the fauna, an excellent introduction to the literature of the Turkish amphibian fauna. At the end of the book are 13 plates of black and white photographs illustrating the covered taxa and some habitats. The photographs (or at least the printing of them) are of rather poor quality, although they are adequate to illustrate pattern differences between the species. An English summary includes a comprehensive key to the amphibians of Turkey. This key, along with the English figure legends, and specific collecting localities, makes this book particularly useful to non-Turkish speaking herpetologists.

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- Başoğlu, M. and I. Baran. 1977. Türkiye Sürüngenleri. Kısım I. Kaplumbaga ve Kertenkeleler. The Reptiles of Turkey. Part I. The Turtles and Lizards. Ege Üniversitesi Fen Fakültesi Kitaplar Serisi No. 76. İlker Matbaası; Bornova/Izmir, 255 pp., 16 pls.
- Başoğlu, M. and I. Baran. 1980. Türkiye Sürüngenleri. Kısım II. Yılanlar. The Reptiles of Turkey. Part II. Snakes. Ege Üniversitesi Fen Fakültesi Kitaplar Serisi No. 81. İlker Matbaası; Bornova/Izmir, 218 pp.