The production of this much-awaited facsimile reprint of the *Erpétologie Générale* has similarly been a Herculean task. The largest single facsimile project ever produced by the SSAR, the nine original tomes and atlas are here bound into six handomely bound volumes (two tomes in most facsimile volumes, with the two parts of Tome 7 constituting a single volume). The first volume begins with an extraordinarily thorough biographical chapter (102 pages) by Roger Bour that provides much new material on the authors and their place in French society of the time, the history of publication of the work and its reception by others, and corrects a number of errors that have been perpetuated in earlier literature on the topic (including, surprisingly, Bibron's date of birth). With Duméril senior in particular also having significant activities in botany, entomology, ichthyology, and medicine (he retained a private medical practice until he was 74, and taught generations of medical students anatomy and pathology), this material will be of broad interest to historians outside of herpetology.

This has clearly been a labor of love for Bour, with the liberal scattering of quotations from contemporary sources, including Duméril's personal letters, and color reproductions of documents and illustrations, combining to give a very personal perspective on the authors' lives. I was particularly struck by the suggestion that Duméril may have inadvertently passed on the smallpox that claimed Lacépède's life through a handshake made after examining patients with the disease—possibly the only case in herpetology of career advancement through killing one's superior.

At the other end of the reprint, Mélanie Pérez, supervised by Bour, and with additional assistance from Kraig Adler, undertook the equally valuable task of creating an extensive index to scientific names that concludes the last text volume, making the information much more accessible (the original largely lacked indices, concluding each tome with a contents listing; the only alphabetic listing, at the end of Tome 9, mixing vernacular and Latin names and only covering genera and higher groups).

The reproduction of the facsimile is of excellent quality. The original text had occasional printing imperfections, varying between copies. These and the inevitable foxing and print-throughs in old books have been fastidiously corrected in the facsimile, making the text as readable as possible, although the scanning is of slightly lower resolution than the original print. The many fold-out synoptic tables in the original are here slightly reduced to fit on facing pages, and inserted (unpaginated, as in the original) in the text. The plates, reprinted here as a single Atlas (the original plates were issued separately in ten parts to accompany the original volumes, in both colored and uncolored versions) are reproduced in both formats on facing pages. This is to allow full details of the plates to be viewed, as the original coloring obscured some of the line details. Although there are some differences in the coloring, in shade, tint and detail, between the facsimile and online scans of two copies of the Atlas on the Biodiversity Heritage Library site (from the Harvard and Smithsonian libraries), these seem to largely reflect individual variation created by the hand coloring of the originals. The vibrant hues of the original plates remain in the facsimile.

The production of a facsimile on this scale is a costly exercise. Luckily, this facsimile was subsidized by a large donation to SSAR by Ronald Javitch, who must be profusely thanked for his generosity. The result is a high-quality facsimile at a bargain basement price for the size of the work. Given the high price of the original at recent sales (two uncolored sets currently available online are priced between US $8000–9000, and even cheap paperback print-on-demand copies cost about US $30 per volume), the limited print run (400 copies) will undoubtedly result in a rapid appreciation of the value of these facsimile sets, so get them while you can.


**Venomous Reptiles of the United States, Canada, and Northern Mexico (volumes 1 & 2)**


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There seems to be a long-standing tradition in North American herpetology, especially when it comes to writing books about snakes, for husband and wife co-authorships or publishing collaborations. Examples include Albert and Anna Wright (1957a, b, 1962), Sherman and Madge Minton (1971, 1973), and Roger and Isabelle Conant (1958, 1975). Carl and Evelyn Ernst continued this trend with _Snakes of the United States and Canada_ (2003), and they now present their two-volume _Venomous Reptiles of the United States, Canada and Northern Mexico_.

This most recent twin-tome publication is effectively an expansion and update on Carl Ernst's earlier, single-authored, _Venomous Reptiles of North America_ (1992), the geographical scope now enlarged to include all "venomous reptiles from the northernmost distribution in southern Canada, through the United States, to 25°N in continental Mexico, the Baja California Peninsula, and those islands in the Gulf of California and off the Pacific Coast of Baja California where they occur" (p. xii). Defining the Baja Peninsula, the islands of the Sea of Cortez and the Mexican islands in the Pacific Ocean, is simple as they exhibit clearly defined natural boundaries, their coastlines, but more difficult must have been the decision how far south to extend the geographical scope of the books in continental Mexico, and how to delineate the southern-most boundaries when no natural feature, like the Rio Grande or a convenient national border, presents itself. The authors ended up using 25°N latitude, which brings all of Sonora, most of Chihuahua and Coahuila, and the northern parts of Sinaloa, Durango, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas under the umbrella of their volumes. But this decision is not without its problems since this is an invisible line with no bearing on the actual distribution of species. Fully 50% of the 34 species included in these volumes have ranges that extend south of
the Latitude 25°N and two of these species (Agkistrodon taylori and Crotalus tatonacns) occur almost entirely south of this line.

Despite their latitudinal cut-off, the authors provide detailed range maps, with the Mexican state borders clearly indicated, illustrating each taxon's entire distribution, into southern Mexico and even Central American countries where necessary. Also included in the species accounts are all the subspecies of these 34 'North American' species whether those subspecies occur within the stated geographical area of the volumes or not. The result is that 13 subspecies with ranges entirely south of 25° N, are included because their conspecifics occur to the north of that line: Helodera hortiud hortidum, H. h. alvarezi, H. h. charlesbogierti, Micruroides euryxanthus neglectus, Micrurus distans michaencaenis, M. d. oliversi, M. d. zefielfi, M. tener fittingeri, M. t. maculatus, M. t. microgalbineus, Crotalus molossus oaxacns, C. prcesi miquihuanus, and C. scutulatus salsivi. This is refreshing given that many guides fall back on a phrase such as "four subspecies but only the nominate form is represented within the species such as Greenbaum (2012). There is nothing authors can do about this, other changes will undoubtedly follow, but provided the reader is confronted immediately with the consequences of close encounters with the subjects of the two volumes. The first three sections are titled: Venom, Envenomation by North American Reptiles, and Treatment of Envenomation by Reptiles, so the reader is confronted immediately with the consequences of close encounters with the subjects of the two volumes. The next section concerns itself with the other side of the fence, Conservation of Venomous North American Reptiles, a concept many non-reptile oriented members of the public find hard to comprehend.

There follows a Key to the Families of North American Venomous Reptiles, which might be considered superfluous, as anyone with the slightest knowledge of reptiles can immediately distinguish between the three families represented in these volumes. Surely, more helpful would have been the tools to enable an amateur to separate a milk snake from a coral snake, or a water snake from a cottonmouth. True, as already stated, these volumes are only concerned with front-fanged venomous snakes and venomous lizards, but surely that remit extends to determining whether the snake in the yard is actually a venomous species. The inclusion of a short section explaining the importance of the loreal scale in elapid recognition, and heat-sensitive pits in the pitvipers, and the inclusion of the innocuous colubroid snake families in the key, might have enhanced this section and made it more useful to non-herpetologist readers. In this respect I commend Campbell and Lamar (2004), whose second volume contains an entire chapter on venomous snake mimicry and 237 color plates illustrating venomous snake mimics.

From there the two volumes follow the usual arrangement, with Volume One containing Heloderma, Elapidae, and the genera Agkistrodon and Sistrurus from the Viperidae, and Volume Two containing the genus Crotalus.

The species accounts are excellent, highly detailed and comprehensive, with sections devoted to Recognition, Geographic variation, Confusing species, Karyotype, Fossil Record, Distribution, Habitat, Behavior and Ecology, Reproduction, Growth and Longevity, Diet and Feeding Behavior, Venom Delivery System, Venom and Bites, Predators and Defense, Parasites and Pathogens, Populations, and Remarks. These species accounts are intensively researched and I believe Ernst and Ernst will be the first port of call for anybody wishing to check an unusual prey species, behavioral trait or longevity record for any of the 34 species included in these volumes. For information on North American venomous reptiles it is a one-stop shop, so expect it to be cited on a regular basis in the Natural History Notes section of Herpetological Review.

Each species account is also illustrated with grayscale photographs of the species and subspecies concerned, most of them of extremely high quality, as one would expect considering the names in the credits. It is a shame these photographs could not be reproduced in color but the cost of including color images on many if not most pages may have been prohibitive, although the same authors do accomplish this in their earlier volume on the entire snake fauna of the United States and Canada (Ernst and Ernst 2003). Sometimes, however, a grayscale image is more
useful than a color photograph in that detail becomes more apparent, so the fact these images are so reproduced does not detract from the volumes. In fact, if I were to criticize the photography it would be in reference to some of the color plates.

Each volume contains a center section comprising 16 pages of color plates, with two to three plates per page. Some of these plates are excellent but others are of inferior quality, with specimens poorly positioned, too dark with detail obscured, too soft (out of focus) with shallow depth of field, or badly illuminated with stark shadows or color hazes. Many of these images do not do justice to the rest of the books; they look dated and, when one checks back to the earlier volume, it is easy to see why. The 1992 volume contained 32 pages of color plates, equal to the combined total for the 2012 volumes, with 55 individual plates, compared to a total of 76 in the current volumes. Fourteen of these are reused from the earlier volume, in some cases to lesser effect as if the image had been reproduced from a reproduction, rather than the original, with a subsequent loss of quality. This is a shame since some of the color photographs included are excellent, high in detail, well lit, with good depth of field, and with vibrant colors, but the inclusion of a few poor, tired photographs can go a long way to spoil the effect of such high quality images. Given that the North American herpetofauna is probably the most photographed in the world, surely it would have been possible to provide a complete series of new images to enhance these otherwise excellent volumes.

Nit-picking about photography apart, these two volumes are a must-have for anyone interested in the North American herpetofauna, or venomous reptiles and their venoms, and they are likely to grace the shelves of many private and public herpetological libraries. The back cover includes as quote from SciTech Book News: "Likely to remain the standard reference for the next 20 years" and given the impressive content of these two volumes that prediction will probably be proven true.

LITERATURE CITED


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Cyclura—Natural History, Husbandry, and Conservation of West Indian Rock Iguanas


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Rock iguanas (Cyclura) are among the most threatened groups of lizards (Alberts 2000)—a fact much publicized in conservation media outlets. Despite this, a comprehensive, authoritative book on the genus, to which interested persons could be directed, has so far been lacking. Cyclura—Natural History, Husbandry, and Conservation of West Indian Rock Iguanas is the refreshing and much-needed response to this void, a book for the educated public noting the natural history and husbandry of the 16+ species in the genus Cyclura. As the greatest threats to rock iguanas are anthropogenic in nature—habitat loss, hunting, mammal predation, etc.—the authors point out in the introduction that this book is intended "...to educate the public on the plight of rock iguanas and the unfortunate demise their populations have suffered at the hands of people and their feral animals." For those interested in a more academic treatment, Iguanas: Biology and Conservation (Alberts et al. 2004), stemming from the 1997 “Iguanas: Biology and Conservation” symposium and for which Alberts and Lemm were also key editor/contributors, treats diversity in many more iguanas, including sections dedicated to ecology and conservation.

Cyclura is the kind of book that people can spend hours poring over line by line because it is great fun. I imagine that public libraries, schools, veterinary offices, and eco-lodges will derive great satisfaction from including this scholarly, yet accessible book in their collections.

This book has seven chapters, three of which are contributed (Chapter 1: “Evolution and Biogeography” by Catherine Stephen; Chapter 5: “Nutrition” by Ann Ward and Janet Dempsey; Chapter 6: “Health and Medical Management” by Nancy Lung). The progression that the book makes is mostly natural—wild