



The Biology of Small Mammals

Joseph F. Merritt

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The Biology of Small Mammals is the first exploration of the lives of small mammals undertaken in decades. Mammalogist Joseph F. Merritt offers an engaging, in-depth discussion about a diverse array of small mammals, from the rare Kitti's hog-nosed bat of Southeast Asia to the bizarre aye-aye of Madagascar to the familiar woodchuck of North America.

Small mammals include those mammals weighing under five kilograms (approximately eleven pounds). Merritt introduces the various species that fall under this heading, then follows with chapters that cover such topics as behavior, modes of feeding, locomotion, habitat use, reproduction, and coping with heat loss.

Animals of this size face different physiological and ecological challenges than larger mammals. Merritt describes in rich detail how mammals across the globe have adapted to compensate for their small stature, showing how they contribute to and survive in diverse environments in many fascinating ways. For example, arctic foxes, weighing just 3 to 4.3 kilograms, are champion survivors in the cold. They cope with their harsh environs by decreasing activity, seeking shelter in temporary dens and snow burrows, growing a lush winter fur, and undergoing complex physiological changes to insulate themselves from chilling temperatures.

Beautifully illustrated throughout, *The Biology of Small Mammals* provides a valuable and updated reference on nature's more diminutive creatures.

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