

REPTILES OF MONGOLIA. AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES OF MONGOLIA. THE VERTEBRATES OF MONGOLIA by Natalia Ananjeva, Kh. Munkhbayar, Nikolai Orlov, V. F. Orlova, D. V. Semenov and Kh. Terbish. 1997. KMK Ltd., Moscow. 416 pp. Available from Dr. Natalia Ananjeva, Division of Terrestrial Vertebrates, Zoological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg 199034, Russia. Fax: + 812 114 0444; Email: nbanorus@glas.apc.org. ISBN 5-87317-040-1. Price: US\$ 20.

Mongolia's biodiversity was subjected to intensive investigation by a team of Mongolian and Russian biologists in between 1970 and 1990s at the South Gobi Field Station Ekhiyn-Gol. The result was a series of publications entitled 'The Vertebrates of Mongolia', of which the volume under review is a component.

The text is entirely in Russian, except for a three page English summary at the end. The contents include: an introduction, materials and methods, leading straight on to the species accounts, each written by one or more of the four authors of the volume. Species accounts include descriptions (including squamation and size), synonymy, karyotypes, distributional ranges, details of ecology (sometimes illustrated with ethograms, pie charts and bar diagrams) and black-and-white photographs of live and preserved animals to show shape and colour variation, as well as photographs of habitats. Captions to figures are both in Russian and English. The heart of the work also contains a general account

of the reptiles of the country, including biogeography and short review of ecological relationships of species. In all, 21 species are shown as occurring in Mongolia, including three gekkonids, three agamids, seven lacertids, a boid, five colubrids and at least two viperids (the occurrence of a third, *Vipera ursini* is doubtful, with no specific records from the country).

The References cited section includes works in Russian as well as English, two appendices (on physiographic features of Mongolia and details of lizards collected from various stations under the project) and finally, an English summary.

One hopes this significant work will be translated into English and widely distributed.

Indraneil Das

Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, East Malaysia. Email: idas@mailhost.unimas.my
