



Kangaroos: Biology of the Largest Marsupials (Comstock/Cornell Paperbacks)

By Terence J. Dawson

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Kangaroos: Biology of the Largest Marsupials (Comstock/Cornell Paperbacks) By Terence J. Dawson

Kangaroos may be the strangest of mammals - not so much because they keep their babies in pouches and look like a cross between a giant rat and a deer - but because they alone among the large vertebrates can hop. This appealing natural history by an internationally known expert is the only up-to-date book on these unique animals. Illustrating his account with color photos and black-and-white drawings, Terence J. Dawson makes recent research on the biology, locomotion, behavior, and ecology of large kangaroos accessible to readers from tourists to specialists. The six species and four subspecies of red and gray kangaroos occupy habitats across most of Australia, and are distinguished mainly by size from their smaller relatives the wallabies. The largest marsupials, kangaroos belong to the Superfamily Macropodoidae, or "big foots", and are further characterized by complex stomachs and specialized teeth for grazing. Dawson considers the evolution of kangaroos, as well as their energetics, grazing habits, and classification. For each species, he details social organization, habitat, patterns of activity, population structure, reproductive biology and behavior, feeding characteristics, and environmental physiology. The author documents as well the uneven history of coexistence between kangaroos and their human neighbors - both aboriginal and European. In addition to comparing cultural attitudes towards kangaroos, he explores such issues as hunting habits, conservation efforts, the problem of kangaroos as agricultural pests, and the economics of kangaroo ranching. Terence J. Dawson is Professor of Zoology at the School of Biological Science, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

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Review

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