

## **Book Review:**

### **MARINE S. ARAKELYAN, FELIX D. DANIELYAN, CLAUDIA CORTI, ROBERTO SINDACO, ALAN E. LEVITON 2011. Herpetofauna of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles**

STEFANO SCALI

*Museo Civico di Storia Naturale di Milano, corso Venezia 55, I-2012 Milano. E-mail: stefano.scali@comune.milano.it*

“Herpetofauna of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh”, written by Arakelyan, Danielyan, Corti, Sindaco and Leviton (2011) is an original contribution to the knowledge of amphibians and reptiles of a very poorly known but biogeographical relevant area. The authors are among the most important experts of this interesting region and they resumed all the available data on amphibians and reptiles collected during many years of research.

The book includes a geographic, ecological and zoogeographic framework of the two nations. Furthermore, a paleontological record and a historical overview of Armenian herpetological studies complete the introductory part of the volume.

The book covers 17 families (5 of amphibians and 12 of reptiles) and 59 species of which 11 are endemic to the Armenian Plateau and Lesser Caucasus. Identification keys to all the genera and species are also provided and they prove to be very useful, in particular for some similar species, such as those belonging to the parthenogenetic genus *Darevskia*.

The special part describes all the known species, including English vernacular name, synonyms, type locality, taxonomy, general and local distribution, morphological description, karyotype, ecology, and behavior. The species accounts are completed by conservation status information for Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and by a short bibliography, whereas a complete literature is present at the end of the book. Fifteen plates with small but exhaustive pictures illustrate all the species and their distribution in the study area. Seventeen more plates with 92 photos show the main habitats occurring in this region.

A total of 154 pages and 152 pictures, with more than 500 bibliographic references make this book a fundamental instrument for researchers interested in Caucasian fauna, and give a great contribution the knowledge of the whole area. The book can be purchased at the cost of \$ 40.00 at the publisher’s website (<http://www.ssarherps.org/>).

