

A BOOKLET ON MINNESOTA'S MAMMALS

Minnesota Mammals. William Longley and Charles Wechsler (edited by Carrol Henderson). 1977. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 350 Centennial Building, St. Paul 55155. 28 pages. No charge (paper).

This booklet is designed to introduce the general public to the mammals of Minnesota. It mentions 80 species known to occur in the state, including "minor" species such as the northern pocket gopher and silver-haired bat, as well as the more fashionable black bear and timber wolf. Quite a few species are illustrated with scratchboard artwork by Dan Metz. The drawings have artistic appeal, but are by no means intended for field identification. The drawings of footprints would likewise be of limited use in identifying tracks.

No references are given, which makes it difficult to verify some of the "facts" presented, some of which are at best dubious, e.g. fox dens up to 40 feet deep. It seems likely that much of the information came to the authors in anecdotal form.

The authors of the booklet hope to "whet [the reader's] appetite to learn more about the fascinating world of Minnesota mammals." This done, where does the reader turn for more information? Again, the lack of references is a hindrance.

Despite its shortcomings, this booklet is an attractive publication, one which will no doubt whet many appetites to learn more about the mammals of Minnesota.

Staff