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GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTIONS OF THE AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES OF WISCONSIN.
Gary S. Casper. 1996. Milwaukee Public Museum, Inc., Milwaukee, Wisconsin. ISBN 0-89326-200-5. 87 p. \$10.00 (softcover).—Is there any state doing more to determine the status of

their herpetofauna than Wisconsin? In addition to their Frog and Toad Survey, which has been running continuously for the past decade and a half (the granddaddy of all state frog-calling surveys), Wisconsin has initiated the Wisconsin Herpetological Atlas Program. This program has been running for nine years, and Casper's book is to be considered an interim report. The Herp Atlas was born from R. C. Vogt's classic *Natural History of Amphibians and Reptiles in Wisconsin* (1981; now out of print) and is designed to collect and map the distributional records for the herps of Wisconsin and to compile a computerized database to be used for studies of herp ecology and conservation biology. Data have already been used in conservation efforts for Butler's garter snakes, prairie skinks, four-toed salamanders, timber rattlesnakes, eastern massasaugas, ornate box turtles, and Blanchard's cricket frogs. Data are collected by volunteers. Valid data include material that can be examined for correct identification—a photograph, or a specimen housed in a permanent collection. Proceeds from the sale of this book are being funneled back into the Herp Atlas Project.

The stated purpose of this book is to provide a reference for the 461 new county records collected from 1986 through 1995 by the Herp Atlas Project. Short descriptions and distributional maps are provided for each of Wisconsin's 56 species (7 salamanders, 13 frogs and toads, 10 turtles, 4 lizards, and 22 snakes). To illustrate, I include here the complete description for the American toad (*Bufo americanus*): "The eastern American toad is now documented from all 72 counties in Wisconsin. It is a common and ubiquitous species, present wherever appropriate breeding habitat remains. Vogt (1981) reported it from 69 counties. Documentation for the remaining 3 counties is provided here." As indicated by this account, on each map, county designations (black, shaded, or white) distinguish from among Vogt's indicated distributions, the more recent Herp Atlas records, and the absence of records. Counties are considered as units both for ease of illustration and to protect specific sites from exploitation by commercial collectors. Information on specific sites can be requested by contacting personnel at the Milwaukee Public Museum; material will be released at their discretion. For a few species in recent decline, such as Blanchard's cricket frog (*Acris crepitans blanchardi*), maps record historical rather than current distributions. Casper notes these differences and in the written descriptions indicates the known current distributions.

Casper's book is straightforward and effective, a complement to existing field guides with more colorful illustrative material. This inexpensive book is timely and arrives at a point where universal concern about declining herps is being translated into a general base of knowledge about their distributions and basic biology. I recommend it. This book should be on the shelf of every conservation-minded individual in the upper Midwest and every herpetologist in the country. States wise enough to be concerned about their disappearing biodiversity but eager to create the politically expedient illusion of fiscal responsibility should consider this book as a model of effective communication.

I am an Oakland Raiders fan and remember fondly the teams from the mid-1970s. John Madden was the coach then and had a devastatingly effective way of evaluating prospective players (as judged by winning percentage if not by the number of Super Bowl rings): people who make things happen, people who watch things happen, and people who do not know what is happening. I tend to use the same criteria, and with this book Gary Casper once again proves that he is a person who makes things happen.

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