

Book review: “Fauna de Canarias en Peligro de Extinción” by Luis Herrera Mesa, 2024

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HERRERA MESA, L., 2024. Fauna de Canarias en Peligro de Extinción (1º Ed.). McGraw-Hill Interamericana de España S.L., 245 pp. ISBN 8448644921 – 9788448644925.

Fauna de Canarias en Peligro de Extinción (Fauna of the Canary Islands in Danger of Extinction) is an essential work that addresses the rich biodiversity of the Canary Islands, focusing on the species that are endangered. Written by Luis Herrera Mesa, a leading emeritus professor in the Department of Environmental Biology at the University of Navarra, the book combines scientific rigour with accessible prose, making it a valuable read for both academics and the general public.

The book begins with a concise and clear description of the origin and bioclimatic, geological and geographical characteristics of the Canary Islands. It also describes the protected areas and their inclusion in the Natura 2000 network, providing an essential context for understanding the situation of endangered fauna.

This is followed by an extensive chapter on endangered species, classified according to their different degrees of risk. In an attempt to help prevent extinction, the author devotes a chapter to those species under special protection and those considered to be of interest to island ecosystems.

The book also includes a chapter on extinct species, in which the causes of their disappearance are described and analysed. Of particular interest is the part devoted to the giant island lizards, which followed a process of speciation similar to that described by Darwin in the finches of the Galapagos Islands prior to its extinction.

The great faunal diversity of the Canary Islands, as the author points out, would make it almost unfeasible to include “all” the fauna in the book, so he focuses on endangered species. Despite this, the list of species included is enormous and includes from invertebrates (corals, annelids, molluscs, crustaceans and insects) to reptiles, birds and mammals. For each species, a taxonomic status, its position in its group, a description, and even aspects of its ecology and behaviour are given under the heading of habitat and biology.

The careful writing and the magnificent edition of its 245 pages, accompanied by impressive photographs that illustrate the text, make this volume a work of special interest not only for those who study the island’s fauna, but also for anyone interested in or curious about animal life.

In conclusion, *Fauna de Canarias en Peligro de Extinción* is a significant contribution to the literature on conservation in the Canary Islands. Luis Herrera Mesa succeeds in conveying the urgency of protecting the biodiversity of the archipelago, calling for action to preserve this unique natural heritage. It is essential reading for anyone interested in biology, ecology and nature conservation.

