

The Praying Mantids

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Praying mantids have fascinated people for thousands of years. In their *Book of the Dead*, ancient Egyptians honored the mantis as a minor deity, the "Bird-Fly," whose function was to conduct the souls of the dead to the netherworld. The Chinese bred mantids for fighting and celebrated their ferocity and foolhardy courage (they sometimes attack prey larger than themselves) in songs and poems. Today, mantids continue to seize the imaginations of serious researchers and backyard naturalists with their dramatic method of capturing prey, their bizarre "sexual cannibalism," and their appeal as "beneficial" insects.

The Praying Mantids represents the current state of knowledge on these remarkable insects, bringing together all that is currently understood about their ecology, taxonomy, reproduction, sensory systems, motor behavior, and defense strategies. The chapters reflect the strong personal stamp and intellectual commitment of the contributors, who have all done pioneering work in mantid research. Many of the selections present ground-breaking data on topics not previously explored. The text is enhanced by numerous illustrations, including a gallery of color images, and a final section of the book covers information available nowhere else on rearing and breeding techniques. The foreword is written by Professor John Alcock, a leader in the field of animal behavior.

Generously illustrated and admirably comprehensive, *The Praying Mantids* is an invaluable resource for researchers, students, and teachers in the life sciences, as well as a fascinating book for hobbyists and anyone interested in animal behavior and natural history.

Chapters: • The Predatory Behavior of Mantids: Historical Attitudes and Contemporary Questions • Morphology and Taxonomy • Ecology of Praying Mantids • The Ecology and Foraging Strategy of *Tenodera angustipennis* • Mating Behavior • Hearing • Binocular Vision and Distance Estimation • Prey Recognition • Flight and Wing Kinematics • Prey Capture • The Hierarchical Organization of Mantid Behavior • Ontogeny of Defensive Behaviors • Ethology of Defense against Predators • Rearing Techniques, Developmental Time, and Life Span Data for Lab-Reared *Sphodromantis lineola* • Comparative Aspects of Rearing and Breeding Mantids • Mantids in Ecological Research • Histological Techniques for Mantid Research

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