

## VENOMOUS MAMMALS

### Summary

This article presents "specific venomous" mammals (Australian platypus, two species of the genus *Solenodon*, and shrews of the genera *Blarina*, *Neomys* and *Crocidura*), "non-specific venomous" ones (three species of vampire bats), and "presumably venomous" mammals (several species of the genus *Nycticebus*). For centuries there has been a widespread belief that mammals could be as venomous as reptiles. However, this belief remained overlooked by orthodox scientists and was treated as a folklore. Nevertheless, already in the 1950s the first attempts to determine the properties of venoms of the short-tailed shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*) and water shrew (*Neomys fodiens*) were undertaken (among others, by Polish scientists). Recently, the development of

modern techniques of venom separation has contributed to the renewed interest in venomous mammals and allowed to discover the first components of their venoms. Nevertheless, these studies are still at a preliminary stage. This article reviews our knowledge about the properties and functions of mammal venoms and shows the possibilities of their use in medical treatment and production of drugs. It is likely that in the near future we will learn more about the healing properties of these venoms. Thus, it is also possible that many of these substances, similarly to components of the venoms of spiders, bees or snakes, will have a number of applications in pharmacology and medicine.