Book review


The series *Encyclopedia of South American insects* is intended to ‘provide keys to the aquatic insect species known from Brazil’. According to the author, this original goal was expanded to comprise all species of South America, and this is true for the present volume on the suborder Anisoptera of the Odonata (dragonflies). Heckman published similar synopses of the Plecoptera and the Ephemeroptera in this series.

The work consists of a general introduction, an introduction to the Anisoptera, including extensive descriptions of adult and larval morphology, a summary of the ecology, and chapters on preservation and examination of dragonflies, zoogeography, taxonomic problems and suggestions for improvement (of taxonomic studies). The keys to adults and larvae cover page 46 to 661, supplemented with 44 pages of references, and an index of taxonomic names. There is a key to the genera in each family, followed by separate keys to the species per genus. The species distribution by country follows the name of the species in the key. Outline illustrations are provided for nearly all species, according to the author ‘based on’ original publications. The total number of illustrations is very large, but difficult to estimate; the 793 numbered illustrations each consist of about five details on average.

The taxonomic literature of South American odonates is very scattered, and it must have been an immense task to collect the original papers and summarize them adequately. Although not stated by the author, it seems that only works published before 2005 were taken into account. Students of odonates of South America should be grateful that Heckman has successfully finished this compilation of more than 500 primary publications, and no such work was available for this continent up to now.

A few remarks should, however, be made. First, a checklist of the species of South America is missing. I am not certain whether the author follows Rosser Garrison’s (1991, *Argia* 3(2): 1–30, and updated on internet) widely accepted checklist in every detail. Various remarks, e.g. on the status of some species described by Carle in the Austropetaliidae, at least suggest that Heckman used Garrison’s list and annotations, since he does not refer to von Ellenrieder’s (2005) revision of this family. Second, the text is extremely verbose. The general practice of a concise style without articles and verbs in keys is not followed. A further reduction of text would have been possible when using standard abbreviations, such as Ax for ‘antenodal cross-veins’. Third, a final editorial check would have been useful, since I found quite some spelling errors, including a few repeatedly in authors’ names (Bechley, Giejskes). My final remark is on ‘good taxonomy’. The author himself spends many words on suggestions for improvement of present taxonomy, where ‘the importance of good illustrations cannot be overemphasized’. To me, good illustrations are such that they can be compared in style, in magnification, and in view. Since the illustrations were copied from other works, diagnostic key characters are frequently not illustrated. Besides, the illustrations lack scale bar or magnification, while magnification of illustrated couplet characters is not necessarily the same.

This publication can now be compared with another recent publication on South-American odonates, which was extensively reviewed by Dijkstra (*Tijdschrift voor Entomologie* 149 (2006): 202). Garrison, von Ellenrieder & Louton (2006) provide a complete list of the species of the Americas, including synonymy. Keys are provided to the genera, with extensive illustrations of wing venation and other diagnostic characters, and distribution maps. For each genus, a summary is provided of distribution, characters, status of classification, potential for new species, and habitat. This work uses a classification different from traditional use, and also contrary to present practice of splitting and rank inflation. For instance, the Corduliidae and Macromiidae are here considered subfamilies of the Libellulidae, while there is, for instance, a tendency towards further subdivision of the Corduliidae into Austrocorduliidae, Corduliidae, Gomphomacromiidae and Synthemistidae. As another innovation in a synoptic work, Garrison et al. also use the wing terminology as introduced by Riek & Kukalová-Peck.

*continued on page 38*
Although I prefer the concise style and more adequate illustrations of Garrison et al., Heckman’s *Encyclopedia* is far more complete for identification of adults to species level, and also for identification of larval stages. I would recommend both books for libraries; specialists in Odonata should first consider *Dragonfly genera of the New World*.

Jan van Tol

This book reviews the literature on insects and mites feeding on the Olive. It starts with an introduction into the olive tree and its relatives, then follows a check-list of the insects on olive, excluding the mites, but inclusive of many polyphagous species that can be encountered. The remaining text treats a selection of species that are most important on olive in detail: 34 insects and seven mites.

Items covered are the general distribution, host plants, description, seasonal development (and habits) and economic importance. The author gives particular attention to the seasonal development and the occurrence of dormancy in the treated species. Some species are treated in more detail, because much more knowledge is available. After concluding remarks and a summary table, the book ends with a long list of references, a subject index and an author index. At the end there are also 36 colour photographs of some species.

One wonders for whom this book is written: it is essentially an academic review of the biology with emphasis on dormancy. The title of the book suggests more, but the book does not provide means to identify the olive pests, and references to such texts are hidden or absent. It does also not provide practical hints for the treatment of any pest. It undoubtedly covers the written and printed texts sufficiently, but for a book published in 2006 it is at least odd that not a single internet source is listed. This is becoming more problematic when checking the used nomenclature: apart from a number of unnecessary typing errors (e.g. Cirix glauca instead of Cilix glaucata), the names are often outdated or wrong. A quick check in online databases such as Fauna Europaea (2004: www.faunaeur.org) or ScaleNet (since 2003, http://www.sel.barc.usda.gov/scalenet/scalenet.htm) showed that many names could have been checked easily. Examples are: both species listed as Parectopa should be placed in Metriochroa, Tephrocalystia pumilata should be Gymnoscelis rufifasciata, Quadraspidiotus maleti is currently placed in Diaspidiotus and Lepidosaphes destefanii should be L. flava. Neglecting the importance source of the world-wide-web can no longer be justified.

The colour photographs are helpful to recognise damage patterns of some of the pests, but provide a too small selection to give any certainty. Some pictures are poor, especially the adult moth Palpita unonialis, where the characteristic colour is hardly recognizable. Many much better photographs of this moth can easily be found.

In conclusion: this review has its merits for professional applied entomologists, but would have been better published in a journal. Its very high price (more than one dollar per page) also will be an obstacle for many potential users.

Erik van Nieukerken
Book review


This is the seventh volume in a series of travel guides for nature enthusiasts, aiming to provide insight in the nature, coupled with practical information. A first volume on the Cota Doñana was reviewed by me in TVE 148: 350.

This volume treats the beautiful and biodiverse western parts of the Cordillera Bética, including the Alcornocales, Sierra de Grazalema and the Sierra de las Nieves.

The first part of the book treats the various habitats and species groups, with many beautiful colour photographs, the second part is more practical and describes routes. Entomologist’s probably will use guides such as this one for planning their trips and learning about the places where to hunt. The entomological information itself is rudimentary and mainly consists of information on butterflies. There is for example no hint to the very rich and endemic Orthoptera fauna (often heard!), and there are hardly references to entomological books apart from butterfly books.

Some of the criticism I had in 2005, still applies to this volume: the continuous use of English vernacular names throughout the text which have to be checked in a translation table at the end is annoying as is the lack of a species index. Again references to other sources are absent, apart from a short list of recommended reading. Some major texts for the flora are missing, such as the Flora Vascular de Andalucía Occidental and the practical Claves de Flora Iberica. And the classic book by Polunin & Smythies: Flowers of Southwest Europe which still is one of the best books to carry for finding plant localities and identification of plants.

Apart from these minor points, an attractive guide that should accompany any trip to these beautiful mountains.

Erik van Nieukerken