

Literature

Stork, N. E. (ed.) 1990: The Role of Ground Beetles in Ecological and Environmental Studies. — Intercept Ltd. 424 pp. ISBN 0-946707-33-2. Price GBP 40.

As the title of the present book clearly states, its overall objective is to present the role of ground beetles (Coleoptera, Carabidae) in ecological and environmental studies.

The book represents a compilation of oral presentations and posters at the most recent European Carabidologists meeting, this time housed in London in 1989. Before this meeting, six similar meetings dealing with different aspects of Carabidae had been held, the first in the year 1963. At this seventh meeting, more than 75 researchers attended, giving contributions mainly from the European point of view (by far the most well-known continent regarding the beetle family Carabidae). All papers in the volume have been refereed by one or two contributors, which hopefully assures a high scientific standard.

Below is a brief review of the contents of the volume. The total number of contributions is 46, of which 16 are reviews of posters. Besides the poster section the remaining 30 contributions are divided by topic into four different sections as follows: their constraints and evolution (in all 5 contributions). Section two gives information on the relations between carabids and agro-ecosystems. Predation of crop-pests, effects of insecticides and similar items are dealt with in this chapter (7 contributions). Carabid communities and environmental quality are dealt with in section three (11 contributions). In section four, finally, life histories, population studies, migration and feeding in Carabidae are treated (7 contributions) The posters deal with various topics on Carabidae, for instance genetics, distribution, indicators, behavioural aspects and so on.

In general most of the contributions I find informative with a concise text accompanied by well-planned illustrations and tables. Each contribution ends with its own list of references, which makes the volume convenient for practical use, although it expands the book to have some authors and works repeatedly referred to in different contributions (Lindroth, Thiele). Additionally all contributions start on the right-hand page, which results in many empty pages. In a comprehensive book, small printing errors cannot be avoided, and such unfortunate, although in this case insignificant errors can be found here and there (e.g. pp. 111, 195, 220, 234, 283, 359, 391, 395). Besides the dominance of studies concentrated to the European fauna, I am a little disappointed and at the same time surprised that carabidologists seem to avoid sampling methods other than pit fall trapping. It is well known that this method is far from perfect, and has many limitations which make interpretation of results difficult and sometimes even incorrect. I recommend that carabidologists try other sampling techniques in use! There is also a need for comparative studies dealing with other ground-dwelling arthropods, such as for instance the beetle family *Staphylinidae*. This, though it would require a great deal of additional determination work, might in the long run turn out to be worthwhile.

The price of the present volume, GBP 40, may frighten away some presumptive buyers. Nevertheless I think that the book is a convenient way to get acquainted with what is at present going on in carabid-ecology research in Europe.

Olof Biström