

Review

Hansen, M. 1998: Hydraenidae (Coleoptera). World Catalogue of Insects. 1. – Apollo Books 168 pp. ISBN 87-88757-27-7. Price DKR 290:- (standing order discount 10% available from publisher Apollo Books, Kirkeby Sand 19, DK-5771 Stenstrup).

A complete checklist of the described taxa is a prerequisite for all taxonomic work. If one is not available, the first task for the scientist is to provide one. Only when this has been done is it possible to begin work on a revision of a taxonomic group at species level, for example. One must know all introduced taxa! It can be stated that checklists are among the most important tools for taxonomic research. Surprisingly few up-to-date lists on insects exist, although with the increasing interest in the global biodiversity one might have expected that numerous recently published contributions in this field would be available.

It is therefore praiseworthy that Apollo Books has launched a new series of comprehensive taxonomic catalogues. It seems to be the publisher's intention to continue the introduction of new catalogues at the speed of about one new volume per year, and new volumes are said to be in preparation.

This first volume deals with the coleopteran family Hydraenidae. The author of the volume is a renowned international specialist in this insect group. At present almost 40 genera have been included in the family, and some 1150 species have thus far been described. The treated family can thus be classified as medium-sized among the Coleoptera. The species names are listed in alphabetic order and categorized according to genus, while the introduced subspecies are listed under their species names. Each taxon is referred

to its original description and given in its original combination. This format is of great help for all taxonomists working with the family Hydraenidae. The distribution of each species is also briefly presented and the type species are given for all genera. In order to minimize the risk of including records based on misidentifications or misinterpretations, the distributional data presented is taken from recent works whenever possible. Noteworthy in this respect is also the presentation of two new species names in the book. Their introduction became necessary during the preparation of the present catalogue. Self-evidently, the existing synonyms are listed under the valid species name. The book ends with a massive 26-page list of relevant references and an index to the scientific names.

The over-all impression of the reviewed catalogue is very positive. Especially important for users of the checklist is the decision to present the scientific names in their original combinations. In this way a lot of time is saved, as one is not forced to examine every original description. Regarding the volumes in preparation it is to be hoped that they will be of the same high standard as this catalogue. It is of great importance that internationally recognized specialists be selected for the preparation of the other volumes in this series.

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