

## Book review

### Short-palped craneflies of Switzerland

Podenas, S., Geiger, W., Haenni, J.-P. & Gonseth, Y. 2006: Fauna Helvetica 14. Limoniidae & Peditiidae de Suisse. Centre Suisse de cartographie de la faune. Schweizerische Entomologische Gesellschaft, 375 s. ISBN 2-88414-026-3. Price 68,13 EUR.

I had high expectations when I ordered this book dealing with short-palped craneflies (Limoniidae & Peditiidae, Diptera) of Switzerland. The two first mentioned authors are well known cranefly specialists and the third one is a distinguished dipterologist. The book was, however, a huge disappointment. The book relies heavily upon the work of earlier authors and it could be hardly recommended as a standard identification book. My views are defended in the following paragraphs.

The book starts with an introduction, written in French, German and English. I think it would be hard to write a shorter overview on the research of limoniids and peditiids in Switzerland: the total length is one and half pages (about 660 words), about half of it consisting of references embedded in the text. There is no information on the ecology of these families, or their distribution patterns and community structure, not even a summary on the total number of species present in Switzerland.

Morphology of short-palped craneflies is shortly presented in three pages. Figure 1.1 in page 12 is copied from Dienske (1987, Stuttg. Beitr. Naturk. (A) 409: 1–52); for some unknown reasons the authors have not named certain important parts of the head and thorax (e.g. vertex, halteres, pronotum, katapisternum) but relevant wing veins have been named. The key starts by separation of the families within Tipulomorpha (including Ptychopteridae). It is followed by a key to the genera of Limoniidae (p. 23) and Peditiidae (p. 78). In the Limoniidae section the subfamilies Limoniinae, Limnophilinae, Dacty-

lolabinae and Chioneinae are treated separately. I must admit that the key is rich in figures, making it easier to use. But, there are severe problems: most importantly, the key to the genera strictly follows the key constructed by Dienske (1987), but this is not mentioned by the authors. It should have been clearly stated that the key has been published in another context: the authors give the impression, that the key to the genera is their own design, which is not true. The only notable deviations between the key in the book and the original one are *Lipsothrix* and *Elephantomyia* which belonged to other subfamilies at the time when Dienske (1987) made his key. After the key the species found from Switzerland are arranged within subfamilies and genera in alphabetical order. I think it would have been better to present taxonomically related species in the same page rather than according to their name. In addition, there are no author names of the species, not a single word on their morphological details, their ecology or anything. There are just figures, mainly illustrating male hypopygia and wings, female terminalia in lesser extent. A total of 332 species are included in the book.

Sigitas Podenas is mentioned as the producer of the figures, with some minor expectations (Jaroslav Starý [2003, Eur. J. Ent. 100: 587–608] is referred to, but his figures are also copied from Starý [2004, Eur. J. Ent. 101: 657–687]). Let us take an example from the genus *Phylidorea*, pages 146–148. All the figures representing male hypopygia are adopted from Savchenko's (1986, Fauna Ukrainy 14(2): 1–380) acknowledged book. There are only small differences in contrasts between Savchenko's figures and the ones printed in the book. An exception to this is the illustration depicting *P. heterogyna*, which is a poor one; I wouldn't recognize the species on the basis of it. The *P. heterogyna* figure is very similar to a figure presented by de Meijere (1919, Tijdsch. Entomologie 62: 52–97). Other authors have been plagiarized as well: male hypopygium of *Gonomyia ithyphallus* is from the original de-

scription of Lackschewitz (1935, *Naturhist. Maandb.* 24: 9–14), *Erioptera pederi* from the description of Tjeder (1973, *Ent. Scand.* 4: 111–114). The figures representing the genera *Molophilus* and *Ormosia* are mainly prepared by the authors, not plagiary. Both these genera are rich in species and may be difficult to identify. Especially *Molophilus* should have been illustrated both from the lateral and ventral view; in the book only the lateral view is presented. I think the figures depicting *O. aciculata*, *O. loxia*, *O. ruficauda* and *O. staegeriana* are deficient. I have roughly estimated that >90% of the figures representing male hypopygia are copied from already published sources without appropriate references.

Maps illustrating the occurrence of the species in Switzerland in the pages 197–361 take a huge portion of the book. I think the maps are not very informative or the information given by the maps could have been presented in a more space conserving manner (e.g. in a few sentences). Phenology and vertical distribution of the species are presented in diagrams.

To conclude, publishing this piece of work is questionable. I think it is morally wrong to name a price to a book which is predominantly based on a work that has already been done by someone else. This kind of work could be printed, for example, for a course material in universities but not for public distribution. A positive side clearly is that a person interested in short-palped crane flies obtains good quality figures through the book. However, as important as illustrations on wings and hypopygia are for identification, verbal descriptions and morphological diagnoses are still needed, they are indispensable. Thus, a seriously oriented student of European crane flies is still forced to seek original descriptions and other relevant literature from the myriads of sources; this book is definitely not a standard identification book. To summarize, the reviewed book could hardly be recommended to a beginner of short-palped crane flies, mainly due to lack of key to the species level and morphological diagnoses.

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