

BOOK REVIEW

FORSYTHE T.G.: GROUND BEETLES. Naturalists' Handbooks 8. The Richmond Publishing, Slough, 2000, 96 pp. ISBN 0-85546-263-9. Price GBP 8.95 (paperback), GBP 15.00 (hardback).

The abundance, species richness, and attractive colouration of many species of ground beetles have made them popular objects of study for both professional and amateur entomologists for many years. The indispensable tools for further studies of this important group are taxonomic monographs and guides, which make it easier to identify them.

This booklet is an enlarged and revised version of the first edition published in 1986. While only the common species were included in the first edition, the second edition includes all British ground beetles, including the nine species newly recorded since 1986.

The introductory chapter considers several aspects of the natural history of ground beetles. Information covered includes: types of life-cycle, short descriptions of the relationships between feeding strategies and structural adaptations, morphological characteristics in relation to habitat occupied, sound production, and importance of wing dimorphism for dispersion.

Most of the guide is devoted to the identification of British

ground beetles. The six user-friendly keys are designed for identifying adult ground beetles. Characters used in the keys are not necessarily taxonomically and/or phylogenetically the most important ones, but are those that are easily seen. Four colour plates and about 150 nice black and white line drawings of the important characters make identification easy. Although 351 species of carabids are currently recorded from Great Britain and Ireland, not all of them can be identified using this key. For some taxonomically difficult complexes of species, such as e.g. *Pterostichus nigrata* vs. *P. rhaeticus*, or *Acupalpus dubius* vs. *A. exiguus* vs. *A. elegans*, the reader is referred to more specialized papers that deal in detail with the problem.

The guide ends with a short chapter that describes the most popular methods of collecting, rearing, killing, and mounting of both adults and larval stages.

This guide is not an exhaustive entomological monograph, but a clearly and briefly written handbook for identifying British ground beetles. Thanks to its user-friendly image, the guide is valuable for amateur naturalists, students with little experience of field research and last but not least for professional taxonomists and field ecologists.

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