

BOOK REVIEW

Two recent regional books on European Orthoptera

Two recent books on the European Orthoptera are reviewed below. One concerns the biology, faunistics, identification and songs of Danish species (Nielsen, 2000), the other identification of the Swiss fauna (Coray & Thorens, 2001). They are differently formatted, of different scope, the style of illustrations is dissimilar, but what they have in common is their beautiful execution, well thought-of layouts, and wider utility than indicated by their regional allocations. Be blessed the diversity of approaches.

NIELSEN O.F.: DE DANSKE GROESHOPPER (The Danish Grasshoppers; in Danish). Apollo Books, Stenstrup (Denmark), 2000. 192 pp., 137 col. photographs, 70 line drawings, maps, sonograms, CD with songs. (Danmarks Dyreliv [Animal Life of Denmark], Vol. 9). ISBN 87-88757-50-1, ISSN 0109-7164. Price 300,- DK.

The book is concerned with all the Danish orthopterans (in spite of its title). The fauna is poor, containing 32 species only (including surprisingly frequent migrant, *Locusta migratoria*), and this is, perhaps, the reason why it could have been treated so comprehensively. The following data are provided for each species: relatives, diagnostic characters, habitats, life-cycle and development, distribution, and song. The text is accompanied by perfect colour photographs (usually male, female, larva, and a modal habitat), maps of distribution, and sonograms of calling songs. There are extensive introductory part dealing particularly with study of orthopterans and their songs in field, and the book terminates by comparative review of sonograms and key. The latter is ingeniously illustrated: extremely simplified pale diagrams of the whole insect or the pertinent body part with diagnostic characters outlined in black; I have tried the key and can testify how easy can be used by a taxonomic and linguistic outsider. I can recommend application of this method to the majority of entomological field guides providing identification down to the species level. Nielsen's book includes also sound CD with calling and warning songs of nearly all the species, and, as a curiosity and example of power of modern techniques, electronically reconstructed song of 54 mYr old wing of extinct *Pseudotettigonia amoena*.

The book is recommended to orthopterists and entomologists interested in North-European insect fauna, and to other entomologists as well. It is beautiful, combines precise data with popular treatment, shows both the Danish orthopterans and landscape in their beauty, and provides simple and precise means of both structural and acoustic identification. It is regrettable that circulation of such an excellent monograph will probably be limited owing to linguistic barrier.

CORAY A. & THORENS P.: HEUSCHRECKEN DER SCHWEIZ: BESTIMMUNGSSCHLÜSSEL. /ORTHOPTÈRES DE SUISSE: CLÉ DE DETERMINATION. /ORTOTTERI DELLA SVIZZERA: CHIAVE DE DETERMINAZIONE. [Simultaneously in German, French and Italian.] (Fauna Helvetica 5. Orthoptera Identification [= title of the cover].) Centre suisse de cartographie de la faune & Schweizerische Entomologische Gesellschaft, Neuchâtel, 2001. 235 pp., illus., tabs. ISBN 2-88414-016-6, ISSN 1422-6367. Price CHF 50.

This volume of Fauna Helvetica is the first one published trilingually; this reflects in the title which belongs to the category of bibliographers' nightmares. However, its context is within the selfimposed limits perfect. The introductory parts include review of recent taxonomic and nomenclatural changes, groups of figures with captions explaining all the structural terms applied in the key, and, in the legends, complete reviews of Latin, German, French and Italian morphological equivalents.

The core of the book is one long key covering 127 species occurring in Switzerland, and sometimes represented by endemic subspecies. The key couplets are accompanied by character illustrations at opposing pages. The usual faunistic data are not included since they have been fully covered by Thorens & Nadig (1997). Sonograms are used for differentiation of some *Chorthippus* species. The book includes also a taxonomic check-list, exhaustive list of references, and is well indexed.

The illustrations deserve to be mentioned. They perfectly match the text, cover practically all character states utilized in the key, and are admirably executed. The details are structurally precise, and the whole insect illustrations are beautiful and belong to the best I have seen. They are true to scientific requirements but possess at the same time that kind of impressionistic flare which makes them alive.

The book is a perfect tool for identification of Swiss orthopterans and may be used for that purpose even in other Central European countries with the exception of only a few genera (e.g. *Isophya*). One has only to remember the existence of many Alpine and Carpathian endemics with restricted distribution and lack of East Mediterranean and Pannonian elements in the Swiss fauna of Orthoptera.

REFERENCES

THORENS P. & NADIG A. 1997: Atlas de distribution des Orthoptères de Suisse. [Verbreitungsatlas der Orthopteren der Schweiz.] *Documenta Faunistica Helvetica* 16: 236 pp.

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