

BOOK REVIEW

WEYGOLDT P.: WHIP SPIDERS (CHELICERATA: AMBLYPYGI). THEIR BIOLOGY, MORPHOLOGY AND SYSTEMATICS. Apollo Books, Stenstrup, 2000, 163 pp. ISBN 87-88757-46-3. Price DKK 320.

We published a review of F. PUNZO's book: *The Biology of Camel-Spiders (Arachnida, Solifugae)* two years ago (*Eur. J. Entomol.* 96: 462). The groups of Arachnid lacking a modern comprehensive treatise are named in the last sentence of this review. They were: Opilionida, Ricinulei, Uropygi and Amblypygi. This is no longer valid for the Amblypygi! This book by Prof. Weygoldt is an excellent summary of our knowledge of this remarkable group of archaic animals. The author has studied whip spiders for more than 30 years.

There are two introductory chapters: Introduction and Diagnosis, and On the History of Studies on Amblypygi, followed by one on the External Morphology.

Chapter 4. Who is Who among Whip Spiders, consists of a key to the amblypygid genera and a short characterization of the amblypygid genera. There are about 120 species of whip spiders in the world. In terms of size the species range from the smallest (body length of 5–7 mm) representatives of the family Charinidae, through *Paracharon caecus* Hansen, 1921, small (about 7 mm), totally blind inhabitant of termite nests, to the largest species (up to 36 mm) of the genus *Euphrynichus* Weygoldt, 1995, whose pedipalp tibia may reach 85 mm, thus enabling the animal to span, with their pedipalps, nearly 40 cm. The length and reach of the antenniform legs is also noteworthy; these elongated legs, which are used as feelers, play a very important role in orientation, capture of prey and communication.

Chapter 5. General Biology and Anatomy, is the longest and consists of 88 pages. Mating behaviour and sperm transfer are described in detail. Indirect spermatophore transfer, considered as primitive, is in whip spiders by no means primitive: it involves intensive courtship and the production of highly complex spermatophores. All aspects of reproductive biology, and especially the structure of the spermatophore and female genitalia, are described for each family.

In Chapter 6. Distribution and Ecology, the biogeographic regions of the world and their whip spiders are discussed. The majority of whip spiders inhabit tropical rain forests, many species are found in caves, however, some specialised species are able to survive in arid regions. The distribution of the genera *Phrynus* and *Paraphrynus* in Florida and Arizona should be mentioned in a separate part "Nearctic", and not only in the part "Neotropis".

Chapters 7. Endangered Species, 8. Systematics, and 9. Whip Spiders in Captivity, contain important information. Chapter 10. Literature, Subject Index, and Index of Animal Taxa conclude the book.

The book is well illustrated with original line drawings by the author and numerous black-and-white photographs. The book is printed in a legible modern type. May be, the texts to tables and figures should be differentiated from the main text by printing them in a smaller font.

The whip spiders have primitive as well as derived morphological characters and habits, and it is this that makes the study of these animals so interesting; moreover, observation of their behaviour has greatly increased our knowledge and understanding of arachnids in general.

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