

BOOK REVIEW

WHEATER C.P. AND COOK P.A. 2003: *STUDYING INVERTEBRATES*. Naturalists' Handbooks 28. The Richmond Publishing, Slough, 120 pp. ISBN 0-85546-313-9 (paperback). Price GBP 10.00.

This thin handbook is written by two authors from the Department of Environmental and Geographical Sciences, Manchester Metropolitan University, and deals with mostly field ecological methods for studying organisms, with emphasis on those relevant to population and community characteristics of common invertebrate taxa.

The first chapter is on experimental design – often neglected by amateur naturalists, which are not under the supervision of a graduate specialist. The second chapter describes several easy sampling methods, depending on the environment and substrate, recommends simple methods for marking individuals for their recognition when recaptured, lists literature on keeping living invertebrates, and ways of killing and preserving them.

The third chapter, Identifying invertebrates, is so brief and condensed that it is of little help in identifying an unknown

animal to phylum, class or order, despite several line drawings and colour illustrations.

The fourth chapter is a practical guide to simply describing data – population and community characteristics like abundance, density and diversity, and similarities between communities. Although there are many better newer methods, the traditional ones presented may better suit amateur naturalists and enable them to mine valuable information from their raw data. The next two chapters, Statistical testing and Presenting your results are somewhat more advanced, but clearly presented, with procedures for calculating simple tests on a pocket calculator and supported with short statistical tables.

Each volume of the series of Naturalists' Handbooks gives information on one interesting group of organisms, mostly an insect order or family, with an account of their systematics, life history and the study techniques relevant to the group. This volume provides a somewhat old-fashioned but usable toolkit for biological fieldwork on invertebrates. Recommended for high school teachers and young naturalists.

O. Nedvěd