

BOOK REVIEW

MASON F., NARDI G. & TISATO M. (eds): PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM "DEAD WOOD: A KEY TO BIODIVERSITY", Mantova, May 29th–31st 2003. Sherwood 95, Suppl. 2, Compagnia delle Foreste, Arezzo (Italy), 100 pp. ISBN 88-901223-0-7.

This volume is the output of an international symposium organised at the end of the EU's LIFE Nature Project NAT/IT/99/6245, which focused on the conservation of the Bosco della Fontana, one of the few remnants of plain forests in northern Italy. By inviting speakers from various European countries, who had studied the ecological function and conservation value of senescent trees and dead wood, the organisers attempted to present the state-of-the-art of existing knowledge on the role of dead wood and moribund trees in the conservation of saproxylic species, a major component of forest biodiversity. The volume includes seven contributions on vertebrates, mostly cavity-breeding birds, and ten on saproxylic invertebrates (mainly insects); nine papers cover issues of dead wood volumes and qualities in European forests and the associated for-

estry strategies and management practices, educational aspects, wood decomposition and wood-decaying fungi. The proceedings are introduced by a short foreword and a recommendation on specific steps to be taken for the conservation of saproxylics, which summarises the outcome of a round-table discussion held during the symposium and is directed at the EU officials concerned with nature conservation and forestry. For entomologists interested in conservation or forest entomology, this publication presents an interesting up-to-date insight into this area of research and its application. While the coverage of research on saproxylics in this volume could not be fully comprehensive and many contributions are summaries of more detailed work published elsewhere, it presents a good overview of the subject and provides many valuable references. Last but not least many of the contributions report on work conducted in southern Europe, while general knowledge in this field has been mainly based on publications from Fennoscandia, Central Europe and the British Isles.

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