



EVANS A.V. 2023: THE LIVES OF BEETLES: A NATURAL HISTORY OF COLEOPTERA. Princeton University Press, Oxford, 288 pp. ISBN 978-0-691-23651-3. Price USD 35.00.

Arthur V. Evans is an entomologist, teacher and propagator of science at the Department of Entomology in the Smithsonian Institution. He is the author of high number of scientific and popular articles and books on beetles, other insects and spiders. For example, he recently compiled comprehensive illustrated guides to beetles of North America in two books: *Beetles of Eastern North America* (2014) and *Beetles of Western North America* (2021), both published by Princeton University Press.

In this publication, the author summarises the latest scientific findings on beetles in a way accessible to a broad audience. The book contains seven main chapters. The first chapter “Introduction” presents a general overview of beetle’s habitats, morphology and economic and biological importance. The second chapter “Structure and functions” focuses on a deeper examination of beetle’s morphology and functions of particular structures. Numerous phenomena such as adaptations, defense strategies and mimicry are described in detail. The third chapter “Evolution, diversity, and distribution” is on the evolutionary history and fossils of beetles, their taxonomic classification and distribution in zoogeographical realms around the world. The fourth chapter “Communication, reproduction, and development” provides an overview of these topics including various related phenomena such as pheromones, bioluminescence, stridulation, sexual selection, traumatic insemination, parental care, eusociality, metamorphosis and life cycles. The fifth chapter “Feeding habits” summarises trophic strategies and requirements of beetles including their adaptations to various types of food from both a morphological and physiological point of view. In the sixth chapter “Beetles in medicine, science, and technology”, beetles are considered as a

source of inspiration and innovation in biochemistry, medicine, toxicology and bioengineering. The seventh chapter “Study and conservation” focuses on the factors endangering beetles, for example, habitat loss, fragmentation of landscape, pollution, invasions and climate change. In addition, the chapter also presents tools and strategies for protecting beetles. The end of the book also contains suggestions for further reading, a glossary and family classification of beetles. At the end of all chapters, except the first, a “model species” for the chapter is presented. Each of these descriptions contains information on its distribution, bionomy and a detailed description of the phenomena discussed in the chapter often supplemented with a scheme, textbox or diagram and a large photograph of the species with a caption.

Overall, I find this book amazing as the author choses very interesting species of beetles from all around the world to support his ideas. Moreover, all the phenomena are described in a simple and accurate way understandable for a broad spectrum of readers. As a result, the book is very concise and easy to read. However, I would appreciate a more detailed list of the contents at the beginning of the book for better navigation within the chapters. All parts of the book are accompanied by high resolution photographs provided by numerous photographers (listed on the pages 286–287). In my opinion, this is the strongest feature of the book, since the photographs are excellent and illustrative. I also appreciate the “notable feature” which contain surprising information about each “model species”. I can recommend this book not only for beginners in the “beetle world” but also for advanced coleopterologists and ecologists, since they may find interesting information about less known or unusual species of beetles.

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