

BOOK REVIEW

NILSSON A.N.: DYTISCIDAE (COLEOPTERA). In: World Catalogue of Insects, Volume 3. Apollo Books, Stenstrup, Denmark, 2001, 395 pp. ISBN 87-88757-62-5. Price 690 DKK.

The third volume of the series "World Catalogue of Insects" is again on water beetles. It is dedicated to the late Michael Hansen, who masterminded the entire project and contributed the first two volumes on Hydraenidae (1998) and the superfamily Hydrophiloidea (1999) before he suddenly passed away in 2000.

The third volume is by the Swedish specialist Anders Nilsson and presents nearly 400 pages on a family that is both well-known and taxa-rich: The Dytiscidae (excluding the now separate Noteridae). Following the established structure for the series, the third volume is divided into a brief introduction, the catalogue, appendices, references, and a detailed index. The introduction contains information on the higher taxonomy within the family and some of the nomenclatorial changes introduced in the catalogue (including 11 replacement names for newly detected homonyms), and delimits the major zoogeographic units used further in the text. The introduction also mentions data sources (books and papers published before 30 September 2001, checked against the Zoological Record) and important predecessors of the present catalogue, in particular the Zimmermann's classics, which appeared in 1920 in the "Coleopterorum catalogus" series edited by Schenkling. There is moreover a large introductory chapter on "How to read the catalogue".

The catalogue itself does not include any changes to the phylogeny of the family, which is still far from settled. Instead, taxa at all levels are arranged alphabetically. As in previous volumes, each taxon's name is followed by its original combination, type locality, and reference to papers that provide the current status of the taxon. The information also contains the status of the type specimen (whether holotype, lectotype, syntype, or neotype) and references to major papers dealing with the taxonomy of that species (genus etc.), both of which were missing from volumes 1 and 2. On the other hand, data on distribution have been drastically reduced, probably to save space. Instead of listing all the states in which a taxon occurs, including provinces in China and federal states of the USA as in Hansen's catalogues, Nilsson

hints only at major zoogeographical regions. This is perhaps the most serious shortcoming of the present volume. Apart from the above-mentioned replacement names for homonyms, the catalogue contains additional nomenclatorial changes. It is a pity that new synonyms and the new status of taxa are found only in the main text; a separate list of all these changes would make the catalogue even more user-friendly.

The main body of the catalogue is followed by three appendices. The first includes fossil taxa that belong to the family Dytiscidae along with their geological age. The second lists unavailable names (*nomina nuda*, aberrations, and forms and varieties described after 1960). Finally, the third provides the reader with names of the taxa that have been excluded from Dytiscidae.

The entire catalogue has been constructed with great precision. Since it deals with nearly 4000 taxa, it is virtually impossible to be familiar with all the groups and geographical regions. Even the need to collate information from more than 1500 references must have been daunting. However, Anders Nilsson's treatment is excellent; slips and omissions are very scarce in this volume. To provide a few trifling criticisms: the correct citation of Miller (2001e) should read Miller and Lubkin (2001). Moreover, the title of the paper by Vazirani (1969b) should read "Contribution to the study of aquatic beetles 2. A review of the subfamilies Noterinae [...]".

Last but not least, it should be emphasised that the catalogue is available also as an electronic database (Microsoft Access 7.00), which should make future corrections and extensions easy (especially to distributional data and information on where types are deposited). If slightly extended, it would indeed be a flawless source of taxonomic and nomenclatorial information. Even so, the information on 3792 species contained in the present volume finally makes Zimmermann's catalogue obsolete. Nilsson's catalogue provides the up-to-date essence of all important data on the taxonomy of Dytiscidae, including the huge book by Larson, Alarie and Roughley on the Nearctic fauna, which we reviewed in this journal some time ago. Let us hope that despite the sudden death of Michael Hansen, additional volumes of the "World Catalogue of Insects" will soon follow.

J. Hájek & D. Boukal