



Book Reviews

Australian Beetles, Volume 1, Morphology, Classification and Keys, by John Lawrence and Adam Slipinski. Collingwood, Vic: CSIRO Publishing, 2013. ISBN 9780643097285. Hardback. 576 pp.

This is a beautifully produced book with relevance beyond Australia. It is very clearly laid out and with a profusion of excellent and well-chosen illustrations. The 94-page Introduction begins with a brief very well-focussed account of the defining characteristics of beetles and includes a clear résumé of their fossil history. An overview of the principal habitats of Australian beetles, with well-chosen photographs of representative beetles in the various habitats, is followed by a brief but informative account of techniques currently used for collecting beetles.

The section on Adult morphology (33 pp) is well-illustrated by high quality drawings and SEM photographs. It includes, among many other things, a clear explanation of the new terms for the ventral sclerites of the metathorax (metaventricle, etc.). The account of larval morphology, only slightly shorter, is clear, comprehensive and authoritative.

Shorter sections on eggs and pupae are followed by a brief account of beetle biology and special features of the Australian fauna.

Chapter 2, Classification and Keys, has a well-referenced account of the development of the current family classification of the Coleoptera, beginning, in the main, with the work of R. A. Crowson, and outlining the various modifications which have been made to the system, and ending with a note that the story is not over as ongoing studies, including molecular work, continue to provide further insights. This is followed by an ordered list of the 117 families of Coleoptera currently recognised, with approximate numbers of the species known from Australia.

The key to families of adult beetles runs to 293 couplets on 19 pages. It is very clear and a particularly helpful feature is that at the start of the various major groupings that emerge in the key, clear bold headings summarising the defining features of the group (e.g. 'Mesotarsus pseudotetramerous. Rostrum longer than wide') are given, allowing the worker to confirm that he is still on track (or not!). The key to larvae (74 pp, 281 couplets) has a similar form and its greater

length results from provision of numerous illustrations of the characters used.

The treatments of individual families is the largest section of the book, followed by the References and Index. The treatment of each family comprises descriptions of adult and larval morphology, an account of classification and world distribution, and a more detailed description of the Australian fauna.

This book contains a mine of comprehensive, authoritative, well-illustrated and referenced information. It is well-written and a joy to use. Volumes 2 and 3 will give more detailed accounts of the various families (excluding the weevils which have already been covered by fairly recent work), and are something to look forward to.

ROBERT ANGUS

Australian Longhorn Beetles (Coleoptera Cerambycidae) Vol 1, Introduction and Subfamily Lamiinae, by Adam Slipinski and Hermes Escalona. Collingwood, Vic: CSIRO Publishing, 2013. ISBN 9781486300037. Hardback. 504 pp.

The format and high standard of publication are similar to those of 'Australian Beetles'. The accounts of adult and larval morphology are clear and very well illustrated. Keys to species are given and for each species details of material examined, distribution and known details of its biology. An excellent book.

ROBERT ANGUS

Zooplankton of the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. A guide to their identification and Ecology, by William S. Johnson & Dennis M. Allen, with illustrations by Marni Fyelling. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. Second edition: ISBN-13: 978-1-4214-0618-3. 452 pp. Paperback.

I have vivid memories of the first time I saw live plankton down a microscope: such beautiful and bizarre creatures darting and jetting around the petri dish – mostly