BOOK REVIEWS

Weevils, weevils, weevils . . . . .


For a number of years Miguel Alonso-Zarazaga and Chris Lyal have been telling us about their catalogue of weevil families and genera. I am delighted to finally see it in print. This is an essential publication, not just for those interested in weevils, but for anyone concerned in any way with beetles. This volume will have a particularly broad appeal to the many people charged with collection management and curation who for many years have decried the need for a ‘means of organizing the weevils’. Everything about this publication is comprehensive and exhaustive.

The volume begins with introduction and methods sections, followed by sections on problem publications, submissions to the ICZN, higher classification used, nomenclatural changes proposed (and there are quite a few), and lastly a synopsis (to tribe) of the classification used in the catalogue. The bulk of the publication is the catalogue itself which covers some 184 pages. Each family group entry includes a list of synonymy, discussions of taxonomic details (where necessary or interesting), and for each genus, a listing of synonymy, the type species designation (if designated), and a summary of its general distribution. A comprehensive list of references and a variety of indices conclude the book. While it was probably not its primary intention, this book is a big first step towards bringing some stability to the higher classification of the weevils. It may not present the final word on what the classification should be, but it provides a means of readying the collections, stabilizing the nomenclature and setting a staging point for curculionidologists to attack the problem in an organized manner. I can’t help but recommend this publication highly; in a few years I’ll be looking for a new copy as I am sure mine will be dog-eared beyond recognition!


This publication is the result of some of the final work of Robin Craw at the DSIR in New Zealand before his departure for another career. As with all of the numbers in the Fauna of New Zealand series, it is intended primarily as a means of reliably identifying the members of a particular taxon in New Zealand. In this context, it succeeds quite well. It is not a large publication, dealing only with two described genera (Lyperobius and Hadramphus) and 20 species (including eight newly described therein). There is a short section on the taxonomic definition of Molytini, a second section on morphological characters, followed by others on life history and biology, phylogenetic analyses, historical ecology and biogeography, and conservation status and value. These are followed by the taxonomic section including descriptions, a bibliography and lastly a key to the genera and species. These are large, flightless, rather rare weevils, found in insular, montane, alpine and subalpine habitats. Not surprisingly, a number of the species are listed as endangered and thus of conservation importance. In contrast to other numbers, the phylogenetic treatment of the group is extensive and there are a number of interesting general discussions of historical biogeography in New Zealand and the relationships between phylogenetic data and establishing conservation priorities. In all it is a comprehensive study, beautifully and well-illustrated, meeting if not surpassing the standards set by previous numbers. I recommend it for those interested in New Zealand ecology and biogeography as well as its obvious appeal to those with a passion for weevils.


This publication is simply a catalogue of the weevils, listed by name, each followed