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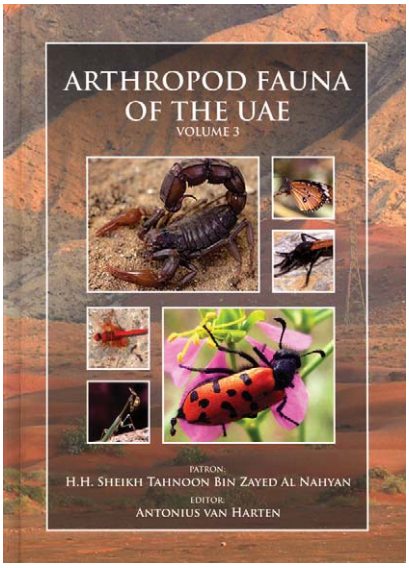
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BOOK REVIEW

'ARTHROPOD FAUNA OF THE UAE. Volume 3.' Patron H. H. Sheikh Tahnoon Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Editor Antonius van Harten. Sharjah, United Arab Emirates: UAE Insect Project, 2010. 700 pp., 24×17 cm. Hardcover. ISBN 978-9948-15-616-1. Available from: Dar Al Ummah Printing, P.O. Box 39975, Abu Dhabi, UAE; Fax: +971-2-6734766.

This book presents the third volume of the ambitious series, which has been successfully initiated a while ago to cover the arthropod fauna of the United Arab Emirates. It also serves as a very appropriate gift to the natural science community, which celebrates the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010.

The major scope of the series is to catalogue biodiversity of the United Arab Emirates, but its significance goes far beyond their borders. This volume once again demonstrates what an amazing result can be achieved, when 51 experts from 20 countries work as a single team.



Of 68 families dealt with, almost a half is recorded as new for the country; one genus and 71 species are described as new to science. In total, some 400 species are added to the list of arthropods recorded from the UAE.

Taxonomic chapters continue to follow the standard developed previously; a brief introduction is followed by a scrupulous systematic account for each family with relevant comments on biology and distribution of species, and the essential references. Identification keys complement selected chapters, but the book would benefit more if such keys become a must for all families. All chapters are lavishly illustrated, with over 279 full-colour plates and 129 sets of black-and-white line-art drawings and photographs. Particularly attractive are photographs of alive jumping spiders, orthopterans and some other insects, although all other colour illustrations are also of exceptional quality and leave an impression of an 'old-style' (in a perfectly positive sense) atlas or a carefully prepared field guide. The chapter on the Nepticulidae continues a good tradition introduced in Volume 2 of the series, combining most meticulous morphological studies of these tiniest moths with analysis of the barcoding gene COI.

The volume is finished off with a list of georeferenced localities mentioned in the book, and with indexes, separately compiled for newly published taxa and for arthropod genera and species.

The editor of the series, graphics editors and the printer must be congratulated on the exceptional quality of production of the book. Inevitably, a small number of minor errors crept in, but in no case they spoil an overall positive impression about the work.

The Patron of the project H. H. Sheikh Tahnoon Bin Zayed Al Nahyan should be appropriately acknowledged for his passionate support of this project. The present volume is highly recommended not only to entomologists, ecologists, conservation specialists, naturalists, but also to funding organisations and sponsors across the world, showing that such investment in biodiversity studies will be truly appreciated by the present-day society, as well as by future generations. In the Preface to this volume, H. H. Sheikh Tahnoon Bin Zayed Al Nahyan urges "…scientists in the country [UAE] to follow up and conduct research into the life history of the arthropod species recorded in the three volumes published so far.", but his message may also be addressed to a broader scientific community and encourages invertebrate taxonomists from other countries to follow suit.

M. B. Mostovski

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