

Book Reviews

Book Review Editor's Note: We are continuing to use the current currency codes. Thus Canadian dollars are CAD, U.S. dollars are USD, Euros are EUR, China Yuan Remimbi are CNY, Australian dollars are AUD and so on.

ZOOLOGY

Arthropods of Canadian Grasslands Volumes 3 and 4: Biodiversity and Systematics Parts 1 and 2

Edited by H.A. Cárcamo, and D.J. Giberson. 2014. Biological Survey of Canada Monograph Series Nos. 5 and 6, Box 3443, Station D, Ottawa, ON, Canada, K1P 6P4. Volume 3, 413 pages, 45.95 CAD, Paper; Volume 4, 479 pages, 45.95 CAD, Paper.

The Biological Survey of Canada (BSC) came into being in 1980 and was affiliated with both the Canadian Museum of Nature (CMN) and the Entomological Society of Canada (ESC). While connections with the CMN have lessened, the BSC remains strongly connected with the ESC and secured full not-for-profit status in 2009. The BSC's main stated goal is to "coordinate scientific research among specialists on the Canadian Biota." This goal has been met mainly through the production of high-quality publications regarding Canada's insect fauna. These publications have included an electronic journal (*Canadian Journal of Arthropod Identification*) as well as a series of scientific monographs focusing on *Arctic Arthropods*, *Aquatic Insects of Peatlands and Marshes in Canada*, *Spring Habitats and their Faunas*, and *Insects of the Yukon*. The most recent offering of the BSC is the *Arthropods of Canadian Grasslands* book series.

Initially conceived as a three-volume set, the *Arthropods of Canadian Grasslands* series is now concluded with a third and bonus fourth volume. The first volume (*Ecology and Interactions in Grassland Habitats*) was published in 2010. The second volume (*Inhabitants of a Changing Landscape*) followed in 2011. These first two volumes focused on defining the history, geography, and general biological makeup of Canadian grasslands. The final two volumes look specifically at the insect groups that call Canadian grasslands their home.

Following a brief chapter introducing the historical biogeography of the grasslands regions of Canada, *Arthropods of Canadian Grasslands* volume three contains thirteen chapters, each focusing on a different group of arthropods and authored by global entomological experts. Volume four follows with eleven more taxonomically focused chapters. The geographical and taxonomic limits are not strict and vary from chapter to chapter and author to author. For example, there are separate chapters on the moths and butterflies of the Prairies and on moths and butterflies of the Peace River grassland region. Smaller orders of insects (e.g., grasshoppers, stoneflies, and dragonflies) are each lumped into single chapters while the larger orders (e.g.,

bees and wasps, beetles, and flies) are divided into multiple chapters each focusing on key families. This flexibility is a distinct advantage as it allows for some groups to be explored in great detail. For instance, one of my favourite chapters discusses the 134 species of Robber Flies (Asilidae) found in Western Canadian Grasslands. Focusing on this single family allows the chapter's author (Dr. Rob Cannings) to discuss the geographical and biological differences amongst these species in great detail.

There does not appear to have been a limit on the use of colour images or high-resolution photographs in either volume. Many chapter authors took advantage of this to include numerous, beautiful photos of the insects of interest. Other chapters, perhaps due to a lack of photogeneity on the part of the featured insects, notably lack any photos. Nearly every chapter includes some variation on the comprehensive species list. This checklist approach is of immense value to researchers and excited amateurs alike.

The unique method of publication for this book, combined with the targeted chapter format of both volumes presents the potential reader with a bit of a quandary. While the bound copies of both volumes are handsome indeed, the nearly one hundred dollar combined sticker price may lead the casual reader to reconsider. Those looking to save money, or finding themselves only interested in certain groups of grassland insects, may choose to download individual chapters for free at www.biologicalsurvey.ca/monographs. Whether on a computer screen or printed out at home, this option allows students of targeted groups to access this valuable information at no charge. As two complete volumes, or as a series of individual chapters, *Arthropods of Canadian Grasslands*, volumes three and four, offers a wealth of insect information for those interested in a unique part of the Canadian biological landscape. Hopefully this book series is a sign of the continued valuable input on the part of the BSC.

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