

The single disappointment of the new edition is the loss of the chart of categories and relationships of fishes from the inside front cover. It is now buried on (un-numbered) pages xvi-xvii, between the Acknowledgments and the Introduction, making it much harder to find. Owners of the book may want to place a permanent bookmark in the chart for quick reference. The new chart, while showing better resolution of groups in this edition, has also lost all the names between Class and Order. While some of these names were for non-cladistic grades, their presence on the previous edition's chart was of great benefit, particularly for students, to determine exactly what is a "teleost" or "actinopterygian", or any of the other names that are commonly used by ichthyologists.

At the end of the list of errata on the website given above, and on page 9 of the new edition, Nelson draws

attention to the need for ichthyologists, and the work that still remains for future generations. He urges us to support the replacement of retiring ichthyologists to continue the work. The Introduction of *Fishes of the World* provides a sampling of all the rich areas of ichthyology to be studied and highlights the importance of fishes to all of us. Perhaps if the Introduction were required reading for everyone, Nelson's enthusiasm for fishes would be passed on to all, and the worth of ichthyological research would be clearly visible to governments and society. This book continues to be a seminal work, finding an essential place in libraries and on the bookshelves of anyone interested in fishes.

BRIAN W. COAD and ALISON M. MURRAY

Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6P4
Canada

Insects: Their Natural History and Diversity: With a photographic guide to insects of eastern North America

By Stephen A. Marshall. 2006. Firefly Books Ltd., 66 Leek Crescent Richmond Hill, Ontario L4B 1H1 Canada. 720 pages. Can \$95. Hardcover.

It has always been said that you can't judge a book by its cover, but after reading *Insects: Their Natural History and Diversity* I've learned that this well-worn axiom isn't always true. When this book first crossed my desk, to say that I was instantly enamoured would be an understatement. It was so beautiful, the cover adorned with a stunning jewel-toned dogbane beetle (*Chrysochus auratus*). I almost didn't want to crack the binding. However my curiosity finally got the better of me and I'm glad it did because once I started reading I couldn't put the book down.

Visually stunning, with over 4000 color photographs of insects in their natural habitats, *Insects: Their Natural History and Diversity* has the look and feel of a glossy coffee table book while still being full of accurate, well researched information.

As its title implies *Insects: Their Natural History and Diversity* focuses on the diversity and natural history of common families of northeastern North American insects. The book opens with a brief synopsis of basic insect anatomy and morphology. This is followed by chapters covering the diversity of all insect orders, including all the major families, along with two chapters on non-insect arthropods and methods for observing, collecting and photographing insects. The book's last 50 pages are dedicated to illustrated keys to order and family as well as a key to the most commonly encountered insect larvae. These keys are designed to facilitate ease of use and therefore emphasize morphological characters visible to the naked eye or easily seen with a hand lens. Also peppered throughout the book are helpful suggestions on where to look for and find various insect orders/families. For example "Depending on your inclination and the weather,

a good place to start looking for assassin bugs would be in your kitchen light fixture. Unless you are much more fastidious than most, the odds are that among the crispy critters accumulated there you will find a large black assassin bug called the Masked Bed Bug Hunter (*Reduvius personatus*)."

Considering that *Insects: Their Natural History and Diversity* is priced so as not to be cost prohibitive and is clearly written in plain language makes it highly accessible to a broad audience including naturalists, amateur entomologists as well as seasoned professionals. The author has also included a dollop of humour and wit throughout the text. For example this passage describing the appearance of springtails: "Some are covered with scales, like those of a butterfly, many are brilliantly colored and all are morphologically bizarre, starting from the long, forked tail used to make Herculean leaps, and ending with the deeply pocketed mouth that makes springtails look like they have lost their dentures and then sucked on a bunch of lemons."

This book would make a great textbook for a natural history or general entomology course. Especially when you consider that the impetus for this book centers on materials originally gathered in support of the author's third-year course "The Natural History of Insects" at the University of Guelph. With its depth of scope and true-to-life color photographs *Insects: Their Natural History and Diversity* would be indispensable in the field; however, due to its size it would be a bit unruly to have to lug around.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and would recommend it whole heartedly to anyone who has an interest in entomology, natural history or a simple curiosity about the six-legged world that surrounds us.

GINA PENNY

Department of Biology, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia B2G 2W5 Canada