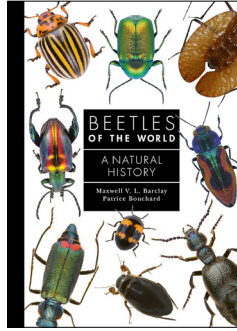


## ENTOMOLOGY

**Beetles of the World: a Natural History. A Guide to Every Family Series**

By Maxwell V.L. Barclay and Patrice Bouchard. 2023. Princeton University Press. 240 pages, 300 colour photos, and 150 colour illustrations, 39.89 CAD, Hardcover, 29.99 CAD, E-book.

Beetles are diverse. They are the most diverse insects—the most diverse *anything*—living on this planet. Can a 240-page book do justice to this diversity? It does. However, the book may have been better titled, ‘An Introduction to the Beetles of the World’, because 240 pages offers only a taste (perhaps intentionally). It’s enough to set the reader on their own journey to discover their favourite clades within the vastness of Coleoptera.



The introduction covers a myriad of topics, including anatomy (basic insect anatomy as well as that specific to beetles), feeding, and fossil history; it is well written and engaging. The depth in which each topic is covered is appropriate for this introductory book. The many photographs are crisp, detailed, and artistic. Just before turning over to the taxonomic section, a well-placed, current cladogram of the order is presented in the classification chapter to orient the reader to the rest of the book. The branches of this cladogram are colour coded to illustrate the richness of each superfamily—a nice touch.

Each two-page spread of the taxonomic section describes one of about 70 groups of beetles, usually at the family level, sometimes as narrow as subfamily,

occasionally as broad as superfamily. There is a range map for each (but see below), accompanied by some basic information such as habitat, diet, and size range. The main text highlights a few species within each group and describes their impact on humans or gives more detailed information than that present in the table accompanying the map. Throughout the book there are typically three very nice images of different species representative of each group.

As a child, you may have had a book with a cartoon in the upper-right corner of every odd-numbered page, and as you riffled through the pages, the cartoon appeared to move. Do this with the range maps in this book and you will see very little movement. The range maps are more or less identical, because the described taxa are so broad (i.e., there are often tens of thousands of species dealt with). There is only one exception, that being the map for the very primitive, species-depauperate suborder Archostemata. All the other maps show distributions covering the entire Northern and Southern Hemispheres up to a hard-to-imagine straight line across the Arctic. Perhaps one map should have been included in the introduction and left at that.

Overall, this is a great book for any beetle enthusiast, but particularly for those early in their passion.

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