BOOK REVIEW


This work is, appropriately enough, dedicated to Milton W. Sanderson who has long been considered North America's premier specialist on Phyllophaga. And, as I have been pleased to discover, the thoroughness and quality of this presentation by Woodruff and Beck are a tribute to Milt and to the study of Scarabaeidae. It is a very nice piece of work.

This volume constitutes part 2 of "The Scarab Beetle of Florida." The first part appeared 17 years ago (Woodruff, 1973), and the third and final part should appear, according to the authors, in a shorter period than was the case between the first two volumes. I remain hopeful that this will happen.

The format of this volume is straightforward and makes the work relatively easy to use. The introduction includes a historical résumé, methods and materials, and collecting techniques. The general account of the genus Phyllophaga contains commentary on taxonomy within the genus, morphology, biology and behavior (including plant hosts, immature stages, life cycle summary, alphabetical list of references to known larvae, and a key to 23 species of larvae). Personally, I have preferred the larval key be adjacent to the key to adults for more convenient use. The general account continues by discussing distribution, economic importance (frequently considerable in this genus), and natural enemies. Sections are included on questionable and potential Florida records, a checklist of Florida species (including synonyms), and a key to the adults. The systematic account of the 54 species occurring in Florida is, necessarily, the longest section, but the authors have wisely decided not to include lengthy descriptions of each species—descriptions that would be tediously similar and largely unusable. Instead, they have opted for concise diagnoses to distinguish each species. The bibliography contains an impressive 376 references and is a valuable resource for anyone wanting additional information on this group.

As anyone familiar with Phyllophaga knows, extensive use of the genitalia of both males and females is the most reliable means of identification. Accordingly, the genitalia are magnificently illustrated with scanning electron micrographs that have had their backgrounds painted a contrasting black. The effect is quite dramatic, aesthetically pleasing, and seems to highlight form and structure more effectively.

The only objection I have (and it's an important one) with the layout of this volume is that the caudal, dorsal, ventral, and left and right views of the male parameres are not grouped by taxon but rather by aspect. To see what the male genitalia of P. anxia, for example, looks like, one needs to see p. 5 (caudal), p. 9 (ventral), p. 14 (dorsal), p. 19 (right lateral), and p. 24 (left lateral). This is incredibly inconvenient and cumbersome, especially when sitting at a scope, holding a "tail" in one hand, and trying to turn pages with the other. The other SEM's, maps, and occasional habitus drawings are very nicely done and eminently useful.

In this study, two new species are described, nine new state records are given, and two species are placed in synonymy. Specimen label data are presented in 39 appendices which, in my opinion, could have been formatted differently to present the same information in less space. On the other hand, if the authors have unlimited space . . .

The book is a usable size at 8 1/2" x 10 1/4". It is softbound and produced on a good quality of paper that reproduces half tones and line shots well. It is priced at $26.00 which I consider to be a fair price.
An important group of scarabs is treated thoroughly and accurately. The methods and taxonomy employed are sound and time-proven. The layout, for the most part, is attractive and useful. All in all, this is a fine addition to the study of scarab beetles and an important contribution to our knowledge of the fauna of Florida. The authors are to be congratulated for a fine piece of work.

REFERENCES CITED


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