

CAPINERA, J. L., R. D. SCOTT, AND T. J. WALKER. 2004. Field Guide to the Grasshoppers, Katydid, and Crickets of the United States. Comstock Publishing Associates (Cornell Univ. Press), Ithaca, NY. vi + 249 pp. ISBN 0-8014-8948-2. Paperback. \$29.95 (also as ISBN-0-8014-4260. Hardback. \$65.00).

I own several books called Field Guides by their various publishers, to various groups of insects and other organisms. For the most part they are very well illustrated and they are about 300 pages long and they now cost about \$20 to \$30. This one is no exception. But it is totally new and does not duplicate a book offered by another publisher. Kudos to Comstock Publishing Associates for producing it.

I own such a book for Orthoptera of the British Isles. The task of its author (Ragge 1965) was much easier than that of the present authors because there are far fewer species in Britain, so all could be included with the addition of stick insects (called walkingsticks in the U.S.A.) and cockroaches (At one time they jointly were considered to form the order Orthoptera). A later book (Ragge & Reynolds 1998) characterizes singing Orthoptera by the sounds they make and covers not just Britain, but western Europe, and comes bundled with two CDs. The book under review (Capinera et al. 2004) does not include a CD of songs, but some of the songs are available cost-free on a website (Walker & Moore 2004). The book under review cannot include all species in America north of Mexico because there are some 1200 species, too many to be included in a book of this size and price. Worse, the taxonomy of the species of America north of Mexico is incomplete: some species have not yet been characterized and cannot yet be included. The authors have selected the species included: about a third of the total occurring in the area, taking care to include the most abundant species as well as representatives of uncommon groups.

I am guessing that most purchasers of such books want and expect to be able to identify any insect seen or captured (of the group in question) to the species level. Field Guides to birds and reptiles do that. For insects in general and for insect orders (or suborders) such as beetles, flies, wasps, moths, and true bugs this will not happen in a North American Field Guide—there are just too many species. Consider the result if this book had included all species of grasshoppers, katydids and crickets. It would have stretched to at least 1000 pages making it bulky, and the multiple of its sale price would have set it at above \$100. Most casual purchasers would have judged this price 'too high' and would not have bought it because it would not have been a typical Field Guide. Therefore, the publisher would have to **increase** the price as a specialty book for a small market in order to make a profit. The authors did as well as they could within the constraints of Field Guide format. Unfortunately, the book gives users no way of knowing whether a specimen at hand has been

identified correctly—because so many species lack any mention, and there are no keys to the genus and species level, and no species list.

Is the public ready for Field Guides to family-level or subfamily-level of insects? One on tiger beetles of the U.S.A. and Canada is in press. Would Field Guides to more obscure families and subfamilies sell? Or, for the future, should Field Guides concentrate on regional works? There already are regional Field Guides to tiger beetles. There already has been a 'Field Guide to butterflies of North America, east of the Great Plains.' These are pertinent questions for publishers. Then, for serious biologists, there is the question of whether some philanthropist or national funding agency would commission a large set of Field Guides (hundreds of volumes) to cover all of the insects of America north of Mexico, each to be of about 300 pages and each to sell for about \$30, subsidized where necessary. Entomologists now have the expertise to produce many of those volumes, and the rest could be produced as knowledge advances.

I am also guessing that most users of Field Guides expect to encounter vernacular names. In this book quite a few vernacular names are newly coined where none existed. I find it ironic that such coined names come to be called 'common' names especially when they have never been used before and in that sense are anything but commonly used. Are readers really averse to using scientific names? Even small children seem to handle scientific names for dinosaurs such as *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Is it necessary to take a perfectly good scientific name such as *Conocephalus strictus* and invent a long-winded second name 'straight-lanced meadow katydid' for it?

On pages 219-221 the authors explain the pronunciation of scientific names. They say there are two systems of pronunciation in English-speaking countries. One is the system of pronunciation explained in Latin textbooks published during the last 50 years; it is taught in Latin classes in the U.S.A. and internationally. The second is Latin as it had come to be pronounced in English-speaking countries by the 19th century [corrupted because it had come, over the centuries, to be pronounced more or less like English]. Its use was abandoned by Latin teachers by the mid-twentieth century. Instead of being allowed to die, it is perpetuated in an entomology textbook (Borror et al. 1989). The authors of this book explain how U.S. (and English-speaking Canadian) orthopterists tend to pronounce the names, and the explanation closely mirrors the Borror et al. (1989) explanation. I am waiting for a future edition of Borror et al. to drop its explanation of

corrupted Latin pronunciation, and instead adopt Latin pronunciation as it is now taught—perhaps then will we (entomologists in the USA and English-speaking Canada) be able to communicate scientific names to entomologists in non-English-speaking countries.

The two paragraphs above do nothing to belittle the accomplishment of these authors. For the first time in the U.S.A. we have an attractive, up-to-date, and beautifully illustrated guide to some of the Orthoptera of the United States (and Canada). As centerfolds, it even has 48 plates of colored drawings of (mainly) lateral views of adult Orthoptera, of high quality, that must have taken months of work. Each species diagnosis includes a distributional map. Species diagnoses, where necessary, include drawings of diagnostic characters. There is an introduction (pp. 5-42). Pictorial keys to subfamily are included (pp. 43-51). Waveforms and spectrograms are included for songs of some species. There is a 3-page bibliography of further reading, a glossary of terms, and an index.

I would have added a classificatory list of all known species, whether diagnosed in the book or not, with names of describers (authors), a fairly easy task for the authors. Perhaps this will be included in a later edition. I would have tried to in-

clude keys to all known genera and species, a much more difficult task, which would lengthen the book. But, in all humility, "I would have . . ." does not indicate that I could have written this book.

J. H. Frank
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