

BOOK REVIEW

Australian Beetles Volume 2. Archostemata, Myxophaga, Adephaga, Polyphaga (part).

Adam Slipinski and John F. Lawrence

Hardback | November 2019 | \$250.00
ISBN: 9780643097308 | 792 pages | 275 x 210 mm
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Colour plates, Illustrations, Photographs

This book is the second part of the three-part series of *Australian Beetles*, written and edited by A. Slipinski and J.F. Lawrence, incorporating the work of numerous international collaborators from Australia, China, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland and U.S.A.. The list of contributing authors appears almost like a „Who is Who” in Australian coleopterology: C. Leman, H. E. Escalona, W.E. Hall, C.H.S. Watts, T.A. Weir, L. Hendrich, M. Baehr, K. Will, P. Zwick, M. Fikacek, Yu-Linzi Zhou, S. Mazur, T. Lackner, N.L. Gunter, Mengjie Jin, E.G. Matthews, O.D. Seeman, C. Reid, A. Ballerio, C. Moeseneder and P.M. Hutchinson.

The series is published by CSIRO Publishers, Melbourne (Vol 1: 2013, Vol.2: 2019). The third volume is still under construction. It is envisaged that the entire series - including Vol. 3. - will represent a comprehensive treatment of the entire beetle fauna of Australia on the suborder, superfamily, family, subfamily, tribe and genus level, with the exception of Curculionioidea, as some of its families have been already treated in the published series of *Australian Weevils* (Zimmerman).

While Vol. 1 discussed Australia's 117 beetle families, Vol. 2. provides information and identification keys to the genera of the suborders Archostemata, Myxophaga, Adephaga and numerous groups of Polyphaga, such as Scirtoidea, Hydrophiloidea, Scarabaeoidea, Buprestoidea and Tenebrionidae. However, in contrary of the original planning, Staphylinoidea is not included in Volume 2 due to the current inavailability of specialists, but will be placed in Volume 3. There are other changes to; while most Australian family limits have remained the same, Hydrophilidae is now broken up into several families and four of those (Georissidae, Hydrochidae, Spercheidea, Hydrophilidae) have representatives in Australia, therefore they are included in Volume 2. The reader will find some changes in the family level classification as it was denoted in Volume 1, Chapter 2. These changes are well justified by recent developments in world-wide studies in adult and larval morphology, increase in molecular sequence data and improvements of phylogenetic analysis. Below family level we find more changes, some even more considerable. As an example, in Volume 1 the family of Carabidae included 13 Australian subfamilies, with most tribes in Harpalinae. In Volume 2 Chapter 12 no subfamilies are recognised, while 37 tribes and subtribes are discussed.

Most of the keys I have tried work well and relatively easy to use. The terrific drawings and photographs aptly illustrate details which would be rather hard to describe with words alone.

This book, together with Volume 1 and with the future Volume 3 represents a milestone in Australian coleopterology. No work of this complexity was ever published about the Australian beetle fauna. It is definitely not



an entry level book for a beginner in coleopterology, but nevertheless, most certainly it is a must for the library of novices and experts in the field, as much as it is absolutely necessary for any institute where researchers work with beetles.

This tome representing a huge amount of work, on 784 pages. The text is illustrated with thousands of detailed drawings, black and white and colour photographs of live and prepared beetles. It is no light reading by any means, not only because of its high level scientific content, but also because the book weighs about 3kg, perhaps a little too heavy to hold in the hands. Its binding seems to be a little too light for its size (275 mm x 210 mm x 50 mm) and weight, therefore it is wise to place it on a solid base (e.g. table or desktop) when turning its pages. However, it is beautifully presented, printed in China by Leo Paper Products Ltd., on responsibly sourced" paper.

Australian Beetles Volume 2 is dedicated to the great coleopterist Martin Baehr(1943 -2019), an outstanding expert of the Australian Carabidae. The editors recognise and thank Ann Hastings for her artwork and Cate Lemann who not only contributed to the text but also created most of the great photographic illustrations. The interesting photos of live beetles were provided by K. Ellingsen, S. Grove, O. Kelly, Z. Liu, J. and M. Lochman and N.Monaghan.

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