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## Book reviews

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*Field Guide to Wildlife of The Gambia: an Introduction to Common Flowers & Animals* by David Penney. Siri Scientific Press, Manchester, U.K. 2009. 120 pp; 554 colour photographs, one colour illustration. Price £14.99 plus post and packing (paperback). ISBN 978 0 9558636 1 5.

The fauna and flora of tropical West Africa is, in the most part, poorly studied and barely recorded and little non-technical information is available for visitors and residents alike, even for such a large, conspicuous and important group as insects. Even specialized, technical information is limited, as evidenced by many revisionary papers that do not include material or records from many West African countries, especially The Gambia. This is particularly true for Gambian invertebrates other than butterflies and dragonflies/damselflies. Thus, insects and arachnids form the main focus of this book, which includes many new country records even at the level of order.

The contents include a brief introduction and scope, including what is known about the Gambian fauna and flora and the climate and geology of the country, including the various different habitat types. This is followed by the field guide section, illustrated by beautiful close-up colour photographs of live animals taken in the field. Sections include: Flowering Plants (102 photos), Fungi (16 photos), Mammals & Birds (18 photos), Reptiles & Amphibians (28 photos), Dragonflies & Damselflies (14 photos), Cockroaches (4 photos), True Bugs (32 photos), Grasshoppers & Crickets (10 photos), Antlions & Lacewings (9 photos), Termites (4 photos), Mantids, Earwigs & Web Spinners (12 photos), Beetles (54 photos), Moths & Butterflies (90 photos), Ants (8 photos), Sawflies, Bees & Wasps (28 photos), True Flies (22 photos), Spiders (78 photos), Other Arachnids (12 photos) and Millipedes & Centipedes (8 photos). The book concludes with short sections on biodiversity and conservation issues and additional resources for those wanting to seek further information. The final page of acknowledgements includes many internationally recognized insect and spider taxonomists who are experts for various different groups, adding confidence in the identifications provided, many of which are to genus and species level.

From an entomological perspective the following genera are illustrated: Odonata: *Ceragrion*, *Azuragrion*, *Palpopleura*, *Pantala*, *Diplacodes*, *Crocothemis*, *Orthetrum*, *Brachythemis*, *Bradinopyga*; Blattodea: *Rhyparobia*, *Gyna*; Hemiptera: *Oxypleura*, *Afzeliada*, *Coccus*, *Proutista*, *Diostrombus*, *Putala*, *Cryptoflata*, *Ptyelus*, *Anoplocnemis*, *Leptoglossus*, *Ranatra*, *Agonoscelis*, *Nezara*, *Bagrada*, *Priassus*, *Aspavia*, *Mirperus*, *Stenocoris*, *Rhinocoris*, *Glymmatophora*, *Reduvius*, *Spilostethus*, *Stalagmostethus*, *Dysdercus*, *Callidea*; Orthoptera: *Pyrgomorpha*, *Zonocerus*, *Acrida*, *Acanthacris*, *Acrotylus*, *Homeogrillus*, *Oecanthus*, *Brachytrupes*, *Phaneroptera*; Neuroptera: *Cueta*, *Palpares*, *Centroclisis*, *Myrmeleon*, *Dichochrysta*, unidentified ascalaphid and mantispid; Isoptera: *Odontotermes*; Mantodea: *Pseudocreobotra*, *Sphodromantis*, *Danuria*, *Miomantis*, *Tarachodes*, *Elaea*, *Empusa*; Dermaptera: *Euborellia*, *Labidura*, *Forficula*; Embioptera: *Aptereibia*; Coleoptera: *Macroma*, *Diplognatha*, *Chondrorrhina*, *Gametis*, *Gnathocera*, *Phonotaenia*, *Pachnoda*, *Anomala*, *Oryctes*, *Alaus*, *Sphenoptera*, *Macrosiagon*, *Hydrophilus*, *Ceilonenes*, *Scarites*, *Tefflus*, *Ropaloteres*, *Lophyra*, *Rhopalizus*, *Apopmecyna*, *Lycus*, *Endustomus*, *Pogonobasis*, *Pinelia*, *Praeugena*, *Vieta*, *Melyris*, *Aspidomorpha*, *Lacoptera*, *Clytra*, *Mesoplatys*, *Colaposoma*, *Epicauta*, *Coryna*, *Mylabris*, *Hadromerus*, *Alcidodes*, *Temnoschoita*, *Brachycerus*, *Ospthilia*, *Lixus*, *Aorus*, *Gasteroclisus*; Lepidoptera: *Utethesia*, *Ardices*, *Syntomis*, *Euchromia*, *Palpita*, *Cyligramma*, *Daphnis*, *Hippotion*, *Nephele*, *Lophostethus*, *Cephonodes*, *Agrius*, *Epiphora*, *Clania*, *Heraclia*, *Crameria*, *Zamadara*, *Idaea*, *Pinsaga*, unidentified Pterophoridae, Scythidae, Lasiocampidae, *Hypolycaena*, *Axiocerces*, *Deudorix*, *Myrina*, *Lampides*, *Zizeeria*, *Zizina*, *Cacyreus*, *Anthene*, *Tarucus*, *Tuxentius*, *Leptotes*, *Euchrysops*, *Chilades*, *Lepidochrysops*, *Azanus*, *Borbo*, *Platylesches*, *Pelopidas*, *Gretna*, *Coeliades*, *Spialia*, *Sarangesa*, *Acraea*, *Phalantha*, *Hypolimnas*, *Junonia*, *Vanessa*, *Hamanumida*, *Danaus*, *Charaxes*, *Catopsilla*, *Eurema*, *Mylothris*, *Belenois*, *Dixiea*, *Pinacopteryx*, *Leptosia*, *Colotis*, *Papilio*, *Graphium*; Hymenoptera: *Oecophylla*, *Pachycondyla*, *Tapinoma*, *Pheidole*, *Lepisiota*, *Camponotus*, *Arge*, *Hypotrigena*, *Apis*, *Xylocopa*, *Megachile*, *Chrysis*, *Nomia*, *Ammophila*, *Philanthus*, *Bembecinus*, *Ampulex*, *Sceliphron*, *Charops*, *Glyptomorpha*, *Evania*,

*Enicospilus*, *Cyphononyx*, *Hemipepsis*, *Anterhynchium*, *Polistes*, *Belonogaster*, unidentified Tiphidae and Ichneumonidae; Diptera: *Peltacanthina*, *Clogmia*, *Anthomyia*, *Bengalia*, *Chrysomya*, *Mimegralla*, *Promachus*, *Microstylum*, *Hermetia*, *Mesembrius*, *Ischiodon*, *Asarkina*, *Tabanus*, *Chrysosoma*, *Ligyra*, *Didacus*, *Ceratitis*, unidentified Culicidae, Milichiidae and Cecidomyiidae. There are no photographs of Ephemeroptera, Phasmatodea, Psocoptera, Phthiraptera, Thysanoptera, Megaloptera, Strepsiptera, Mecoptera or Siphonaptera, although they are mentioned as being present.

With regard to arachnids, the following families are illustrated: Araneae: Salticidae, Thomisidae, Araneidae, Tetragnathidae, Nephilidae, Theridiidae, Sparassidae, Lycosidae, Ctenidae, Zodariidae, Corinnidae, Gnaphosidae, Philodromidae, Pisauridae, Oxyopidae, Miturgidae, Segestriidae, Filistatidae, Deinopidae, Selenopidae, Hersiliidae, Eresidae, Uloboridae, Linyphiidae, Dictynidae, Oecobiidae, Pholcidae, Prodidomidae, Cithaerionidae, Scytodidae, Palpimanidae; Amblypygi: Damonidae; Uropygi: Thelyphonidae; Ricinulei: Ricinuleidae; Solifugae: Solpugidae; Opiliones: Triaenonychidae, Phalangidae; Acari: Ixodidae, Trombididae; Scorpiones: Scorpionidae, Buthidae. Millipedes and centipedes are represented by Spirostreptidae, Odontopygidae, Chelodesmidae, Gomphodesmidae, Paradoxosomatidae, Scutigeridae and Scolopendridae.

Apart from being an extremely useful introduction to the flora and fauna for a general readership, the work is also of important scientific value, although it is not an academic volume. Many of the species illustrated represent new records for The Gambia and even West Africa. This is true for well-studied groups such as butterflies, e.g. *Azanus ubaldus* (Lycaenidae), previously unknown in The Gambia. Most of the spiders represent new records of taxa previously known only from eastern Africa and this is probably also true for many of the insects. The order Ricinulei (hooded tick spiders) represents the first Gambian record and the northernmost record on the African continent. Several of the photographs also illustrate extremely interesting behaviours, such as predation in several groups including dragonflies, spiders, bugs and flies (including cannibalism in Asilidae), milichiid jackal flies scavenging around a feeding crab spider, a queen leaf-cutter ant starting a new colony, camouflage and mimicry in bugs, beetles, moths and spiders, milking of scale insects,

harvesting of insect eggs and colony migration by ants, parasitic behaviour of wasps on spiders and cockroaches and even parasites of humans represented by a tumbu fly larva and a tick both firmly embedded in the skin of the author.

There are additional species not illustrated in this guide (full coverage would be a monumental undertaking), but having visited The Gambia myself, I can state that this book covers those most likely to be seen during a short visit. The book is primarily aimed at identification in the field, so text has been kept to a minimum, although useful field notes are also provided in the figure captions. It should be of interest to anybody with even a passing interest in natural history, especially of insects and spiders, of The Gambia and West Africa in general and is good value for money, given the low price and large number of high-quality photographs. A more authoritative work on spiders and other arachnids of The Gambia has recently been published by the same author, and another on Gambian butterflies is currently in preparation (further details of all these works are available on the publisher's web site below). David Penney, who has spent several years living in The Gambia, is a Visiting Research Fellow in the Faculty of Life Sciences at the University of Manchester, U.K.

The book can be ordered by e-mail: [siri.press@live.co.uk](mailto:siri.press@live.co.uk). For further details, including sample pages and methods of payment, visit <http://www.sirisscientificpress.co.uk>

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*Guides to the Freshwater Invertebrates of Southern Africa. Volume 10: Coleoptera* by R. Stals & I.J. de Moor (Eds). Water Research Commission Report No. TT 320/07, 2007. 263 pp., well illustrated. Price approx. R100.00 (South Africa), \$50.00 (international) (ring-bound soft cover) ISBN 978 1 77005 629 9.

The publication of this volume on water beetles (Coleoptera), the tenth from an intended series of ten volumes on the freshwater invertebrates of southern Africa, is an impressive accomplishment and an important contribution to the study of these organisms. The introductory volume of the series