

Book Reviews

ZOOLOGY

Ontario Odonata. Volume 3 (including observations for the year 2001)

Edited and compiled by Paul M. Catling, Colin D. Jones and Paul Pratt. 2002. The Toronto Entomologists' Association, Toronto, Canada.

The third volume (208 pages) on Odonata (the order that includes dragonflies and damselflies) of Ontario is now available. About 25 papers are included, treating new Ontario records, notes on Odonata species rarely captured, changes in distribution patterns, annotated lists of Odonata from a region, characterization of species commonly confused, book reviews, an up-to-date checklist of 166 species (80% of the Canadian fauna!) and changes in abundance for many species since Walker's work in the 1940s, and a checklist of species.

The lists of Ontario records are most impressive, comprising about 62% of Volume 3, and summarizing in a database format the information about species, locality, number of males, females and immatures for each record. Though the bulk of the records are for 2001, additional records not previously published cover the years 1996 to 1998. The total number for these four years is an impressive 6059 records. Including similar lists in volumes 1 and 2, 15370 records are now databased for 1996 to 2001. Specimens in collections previously added to about 13000 Ontario specimens. This is an exceptional contribution to the natural history of Ontario, providing a solid base to show the distribution of each species, and for the conservation of Ontario Odonata. Hopefully in time, this information could lead to books on Odonata of Ontario. About 1800 databased specimens of Odonata of Ontario are deposited as voucher in the Canadian National Collection, which has been massively upgraded in the past two years (Figure 1).



FIGURE 1. Portion of the Odonata collection at the Canadian National Collection of insects. Unmounted specimens are filed in glassine envelopes.

Among the many articles, the one by Paul Catling on the characterization of males and females of *Lestes disjunctus* and *L. forcipatus* was most welcome. Both species have often been confused by many students.

The editors intend to produce this type of document for another two years. By then it is hoped that about 25000 records will have been entered. These records will become the base for future work on Odonata of Ontario as well as a time capsule at the very end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century. We must congratulate the 31 contributors listed with their address and e-mail coordinates on page 105. Such a massive effort could not be done singly.

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Mammals of Ontario

By Tamara Eder. 2002. Lone Pine Publishing, Edmonton, Alberta. 215 pages. \$24.95.

Surprisingly, this is the first field guide to the mammals of Ontario published since Cross and Dymond's (1929) descriptive handbook. Although Dobbyn (1994) recently wrote a technical atlas of mammal distributions, the need for an identification book was probably lessened by the authoritative work of Peterson (1966) for the mammals of eastern Canada. Expectations were

therefore high for the first guide written about Ontario mammals.

The book is beautifully presented with nice colour figures, good layout design, and relatively compact size. It begins with a colour-coded and page-referenced table of contents, which is also reproduced on the back cover. This is followed by an expanded quick reference guide to the 78 species of mammals, grouped by taxonomic order, found in Ontario. Eight species are excluded because they are essentially considered non-

resident or exotics in the province (Dobbyn 1994). There is a short introduction that discusses the major habitat types in Ontario, seasonal effects, and mammal watching in the province. Oddly, a map with 12 places to see mammals in Ontario is found 8 pages before the descriptions of some of these Provincial and National Parks. From a practical point of view, only a few of these parks (e.g., Algonquin) are readily accessible whereas others are essentially inaccessible (e.g., Polar Bear). It would have been useful to list some sites in southern Ontario, such as the Bruce Trail along the Niagara Escarpment. The introduction ends with an "About This Book" section going over the taxonomic organization, use of scientific and common names, distribution maps, and the identification of species. It does not, however, review the information or topics presented within each species account.

In general, topics covered in the species accounts include anecdotal natural history facts, other names in addition to the scientific and common name, description of the mammal, its range, habitat, and food; where it sleeps, number of young, and a description of similar species. These topics are interspersed with a combination of distribution map, illustrations, tracks, range of measurements, "Did you know?" sidebar, and usually a photograph. The maps, unfortunately, are difficult to read because the dark shading for presence and light shading for absence is confusing when overlaid on the base map, which is further shaded (with perhaps vegetation?). Occurring several times throughout the book is a duplication of information in the "Did you know?" section and also in the text. In addition, the illustration of a similar species is a reduced version from the original species account. The drawings and photographs are, however, of very good quality.

The species accounts are organized taxonomically by order and family with a brief introduction to each group. Some information in these introductions is unclear and there are no references cited in the text nor is there a bibliography presented at the end of the book to verify any facts. For example, in the carnivore section, skunks are placed in their own family separate from weasels based on recent DNA studies. However, it is

also stated that hair seals share a common ancestor with weasels, which is misleading because walruses and skunks are each more closely related to hair seals and weasels, respectively, as was also concluded by the same DNA studies (Dragoo and Honeycutt 1997). The bat and shrew sections each begin with a dichotomous identification key to species, which seems unexpected because none of the other groups has one. The species accounts, which comprise 85% of the book, are followed by a short glossary and indices to scientific and common names.

My major complaint about this book is that most of the information has been previously published in other mammal field guides by Lone Pine Publishing. This includes sections copied verbatim, in addition to the use of the same photographs and illustrations for species that happen to be found in both areas of interest. This style of "form-letter" field guides leaves very little specific information about the animals in Ontario. There is only generalized information about the species in North America as evidenced by the range descriptions with no details about where the mammal is found in Ontario. Nonetheless, the book presentation is good, although I would have preferred an expanded introduction going deeper into issues such as the role of mammals in the environment and conservation of biodiversity in Ontario. If you already have a book in this series, it may not be absolutely necessary to get another, but one is definitely nice.

Literature Cited

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Mammals of North America

By Roland W. Kays and Don E. Wilson. 2002. Princeton University Press, Princeton. 240 pages, Cloth U.S. \$19.95

This new field guide is just what a field guide should be, small, well-organized and informative. Princeton has adopted the best format of having the animals' illustrations on the right page of each two-page spread, while on the left is the text and distribution map. I've never liked the other formats where the reader must go to up to three different parts of the same guide for these obviously-related pieces of information.

This guide also has several two-page spreads that perhaps were based on the great examples in the *Golden*

Guide to Birds of North America. In the latter, all of the confusing warblers, and then all of the sparrows, are illustrated a second time on two-page spreads to help the field biologist or birder more quickly identify these tricky birds. In the Princeton guide, the "confusing cave Chiroptera" are so illustrated, as are bow-riding whales and dolphins. Further double-page illustration sets are in black-and-white, and include profiles of breaching and blowing whales, scats, and foot prints. I like these; in the field, these two-page spreads are a joy to use and save much page-flipping.

The illustrations have been created by eleven artists, and as a general comment, I think they are all good.