



## BOOK REVIEW



### **Invertebrates of a forest from the Po Plain, Bosco della Fontana Second Contribution**

CERRETTI P., HARDERSEN S., MASON F., NARDI G., TISATO M. & ZAPPAROLI M. (eds):  
Invertebrati di una foresta della Pianura Padana, Bosco della Fontana. Secondo Contributo.  
*CNBF: Centro Nazionale per lo Studio e la Conservazione della Biodiversità Forestale di  
Verona – Bosco della Fontana, 2004, 304 pp., ISBN 88-8314-335-3*

This book is actually a miscellaneous collection of 19 scientific papers, of which 14 are in English, the other five in Italian, each accompanied by a summary in Italian or English, respectively. The volume is A4 format, paperbound, printed attractively on quality glossy paper, with numerous colour pictures showing some habitats and insects. It starts with

a foreword and an introduction in both the languages, and is completed by several short notes, all in English, that collectively put on record another 299 invertebrate species previously unknown from the “Bosco della Fontana” Nature Reserve.

This nature reserve represents a patch of relict lowland nemoral woodland located near Mantua, northern Italy, showing a profound variety of forest as well as freshwater habitats and thus representing one of Italy’s hotspots of biodiversity and conservation. At present it supports over 1700 invertebrate species alone.

As implied by its subtitle, this is the second volume devoted to an assessment of the fauna, biology, ecology and conservation of various invertebrate groups populating the nature reserve. The main papers in this miscellany largely deal with insects, i.e. Odonata (by S. Hardersen), Coleoptera (Carabidae, by A. Vigna Taglianti; aquatic Adephaga, by G. Nardi; Nosodendridae and Dermestidae, by J. Háva & G. Nardi; Bostrichidae and Anobiidae, by G. Nardi and P. Zahradník; Ptiliidae, by M. Sörensson; Throscidae, by L. Leseigneur; Latridiidae, by W. H. Rucker; Laemophloeidae and Silvanidae, by E. Ratti; and Scolytidae, by M. Faccoli & J.-P. Rukalski), Mecoptera (by A. Letardi), Lepidoptera (by P. Huemer), and Diptera (Sciaroidea, by P. Chandler; Culicidae, by L. Toma; Stratiomyidae, by F. Mason; Asilidae, by B. Birtele; and Tachinidae, by F. Cerretti, D. Whitmore, F. Mason & A. Vigna Taglianti). A notable exception is the paper by M. Zapparoli on the structure and diversity of Chilopoda populations of the nature reserve.

The papers differ considerably in length and scope. Only a few, like those on centipedes (20 species) and carabid beetles (71 species), are particularly profound in focusing on ecological rather than faunistic issues. The paper on dragonflies (31 species) is notable for a detailed analysis of phenological observations, whereas the contribution dealing with tachinid flies (41 species) is remarkable for its phenological data as well as habitat-mosaic approaches based on Malaise trapping both in the understorey and canopy regions. The bulk of the papers, however, are purely faunistic, even the large one on Lepidoptera (407 species). A few are even provisional, each with only a handful species involved, but also provided with brief notes concerning ecology and/or the distribution pattern. One paper is experimental, focusing on the behaviour of scolytid beetles as attracted by freshly cut oak timber.

Several of the papers, especially those dealing with aquatic insects, put emphasis on conservation. Among the proposed solutions to the problem of freshwater biodiversity decline, maintenance and management is even a suggested territorial acquisition of the nature reserve due to an adjacent wetland.

This volume is certainly exemplary in terms of international cooperation, as well as in covering such a variety of invertebrate groups of a small but most interesting, relict woodland area in Southern Europe. Its importance, as well as of the whole publication series hopefully to be continued, reaches far beyond the national borders of Italy. This is clearly emphasized by the contributors representing not only Italy, but also Sweden, Germany, France, Czech Republic and the UK. Unsurprisingly, most of the papers are in English. In addition, the different approaches, statistics and techniques used in some of the contributions make the book relevant not only on the European scale, but even globally.

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