

## Buchbesprechungen

9. Compagno, L. J. V.: Sharks of the order Carcharhiniformes. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey 1988. 580 pp. ISBN 0-691-08453-X.

The present book is a review of carcharhinoid sharks systematics and morphology based on the author's Ph. D. thesis. The text is divided into 21 chapters. The first chapter introduces the carcharhinoid sharks and presents the problems of their former classification. The next ten chapters discuss the characters used in the classification presented here and the next nine chapters deal the classification proper, including discussions of the order Carcharhiniformes and its relationships to other shark groups, definitions and discussions of the families, subfamilies, tribes, and genera, species and their synonyms, distribution, and material examined. The last chapter discusses the phylogeny of the Carcharhiniformes, with cladistic analyses and classification. The illustrations are grouped at the end of the text in 68 pages of 'figures' and 26 pages of 'plates' (they would definitively have been more easier to consult if they had been in the text and numbered in a single consistent series).

The Carcharhiniformes include eight families, 48 genera and about 200 shark species or about 55 % of the known shark species. The bulk of the text is dealing with morphology, anatomy and supraspecific systematic; an account of all known Carcharhiniformes species with detailed data on distribution, etc. has already been published earlier by the author in the form of a FAO catalogue (Compagno 1984) and is not repeated here.

I had a particular interest for the very detailed account of the genus *Glypis* or river sharks which includes the notorious Ganges shark from India which has a fearsome (most probably unjustified) reputation as a man-eater. The author examined the only known recent specimen of *G. gangeticus* in Calcutta.

A deception comes from the fact that the author apparently never visited those European Institutions which hold most of the old type collections for carcharhinoids. In this case it is very diagnostic to read: (p. 332) "the Berlin specimen was apparently lost" [it is actually still extant (see: Paepke, 1988)]; (p. 332) "determination of the identity of *siamensis* will require reexamination of its holotype, which may be in the Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna [... it is] not known if it still exists"; (p. 333) "two stuffed specimens in the British Museum Natural History ... are of uncertain identity and may no longer exist". If the author could travel to India to examine sharks in Calcutta, it is very difficult to understand why he has not been able to write a letter to ask these museums about the fate of these specimens. The mention, p. 331, that the Berlin specimen of *G. gangeticus* is '5½ Fuss' long or an estimated 1780 mm "assuming the use of a 27 millimeter inch in Germany at the time" is almost a free assertion: Germany did not exist at that time and what today is Germany was a constellation of larger or smaller states, most of them having their own standards; estimations are that there has been more than 100 different feet between 25 and 34 cm in use, divided in either 10 or 12 inches. According to Paepke this specimen actually is 1850 mm total length and the Prussian foot was 314 mm.

### References:

- Compagno, L. J. V. 1984. Sharks of the world. An annotated and illustrated catalogue of shark species known to date. FAO Fish. Synopsis, 125 (4):2 vols., 1-655
- Paepke, H.-J. & K. Schmidt. 1988. Kritischer Katalog der Typen der Fische Sammlung des Zoologischen Museums Berlin. Teil 2: Agnatha, Chondrichthyes. Mitt. Zool. Mus. Berlin, 64 (1): 155-189, pls. 7-8

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10. Sterba, G. 1989. Aquarienkunde. Ulmer Verlag, Stuttgart, 487 pp., ISBN 3-8001-7198-8.

This is a revised edition of the two volumes standard book first published in 1954. It includes chapters on aquariums and their construction, aquarium installation, water chemistry, aeration filtration, heating, lighting, aquarium care, special material, fish anatomy and physiology, reproduction, genetics, behaviour, breeding, feeding, systematics, aquatic invertebrates as aquarium animals, fish species and families of interest for aquarists, diseases, aquatic plants, algae. The chapters on technical aspects of aquarium material are somewhat outdated. The chapters on fish anatomy and physiology, reproduction and genetics are noteworthy for the quality of the content and the chapters on invertebrates present a variety of animals seldom seen in aquarium books. The fish and plant species discussed have been chosen for their biological interest or as they are those commonly available aquarium inhabitants. The book is illustrated by 515 colour photographs and by 177, usually very informative, line drawings.

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