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Two new species and a new subgenus of the genus *Tachyta* Kirby, 1837 from Australia (Coleoptera, Carabidae, Bembidiini, Tachyina)

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Abstract

Two new species of the bembidiine genus *Tachyta* KIRBY, 1837 are described from Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland, Australia: *Tachyta alutacea* nov.sp. of the nominate subgenus and related to *T. brunnipennis* (MACLEAY, 1871); and *T. punctipennis* nov.sp. which is the single representative of the newly erected subgenus *Australotachyta* subgen. nov. For the Australian species of the genus *Tachyta* a complete new key is provided.

Zusammenfassung

Zwei neue Arten der Gattung *Tachyta* KIRBY, 1837 aus der Tribus Bembidiini werden von der Cape York Peninsula, Nord-Queensland, Australien, beschrieben: *Tachyta alutacea* nov.sp. aus der Nominat-Untergattung und verwandt mit *T. brunnipennis* (MACLEAY, 1871); und *T. punctipennis* nov.sp., die einzige Art der neu beschriebenen Untergattung *Australotachyta* subgen. nov. Für die australischen Arten der Gattung *Tachyta* ist ein neuer Bestimmungsschlüssel beigefügt.

Introduction

Tachyta KIRBY, 1837 is a genus of small tachyneine carabid beetles that includes slightly more than 20 species. The genus occurs almost worldwide but is absent from the Neotropical Region, except one species that occurs on the island of Haiti. Four species were so far recorded from Australia: *T. brunnipennis* (MACLEAY, 1871), *T. ovata* BAEHR, 1986, *T. rexensis* MOORE, 2000, and *T. palmerstoni* BAEHR, 2006 (ERWIN 1975, BAEHR 1986, 2006, MOORE et al. 1987, MOORE 2000, LORENZ 2005). *T. brunnipennis* is distributed through eastern Queensland, the northern parts of the Northern Territory, adjacent Western Australia north of the Great Sandy Desert, and it also occurs in south-eastern New Guinea. *T. ovata* is so far known from tropical Northern Territory and adjacent extreme northern Western Australia and in its whole range it is sympatric with *T. brunnipennis*. *T. rexensis* and *T. palmerstoni* occur only in north-eastern Queensland. Whereas *T. brunnipennis* and *T. ovata* live under bark of trees in open forest and woodland, *T. rexensis* and *T. palmerstoni* seem to be rainforest dwelling species that were sampled from the bark of rainforest trees in montane rain forest. *T. brunnipennis* and *T. ovata* are rather common and sometimes can be found in large numbers in suitable environments, whereas of *T. rexensis* and *T. palmerstoni* so far only single or very few specimens are known.

The genus was divided by ERWIN (1975) into two subgenera. *Tachyta* s. str. includes depressed species with more or less distinct, but always present microreticulation on the whole dorsal surface, while the subgenus *Paratachyta* ERWIN, 1975 comprises few very glossy species which lack any microreticulation except on the labrum. This latter subgenus is confined to the southern Oriental Region and the Papuan Subregion, but was not yet recorded from Australia, whereas the nominate subgenus is distributed through the whole range of the genus. Therefore all Australian species described so far belong to the nominate subgenus.

During recent examination of various *Tachys*-like carabid specimens in the Australian National Insect Collection, Canberra, I detected a few specimens of the genus *Tachyta* that clearly differ from the species so far recorded from Australia and likewise from any New Guinean and Oriental species. Although one of the new species is represented by a single specimen only which, moreover, is a female, the external characters of the new species are so strikingly different from all known species that the description is justified.

The other new species is very dissimilar in shape and surface structure from all described *Tachyta*, so that it would be included in another genus, were it not for the typical elongate, straight, and oblique recurrent elytral stria that runs close to the elytral margin in the typical *Tachyta*-like manner. In view of its striking differences to both subgenera an additional subgenus *Australotachyta* is erected for this species.

Methods

For the taxonomic treatment standard methods were used. The genitalia were removed from specimens relaxed for a night in a jar under moist atmosphere, then cleaned for a short while in hot 10% KOH. The habitus photographs were obtained by a digital camera using ProgRes CapturePro 2.6 and AutoMontage and subsequently were worked with Corel Photo Paint X4.

Measurements were taken using a stereo microscope with an ocular micrometer. Length has been measured from the apex of the labrum to the apex of the elytra. Length of pronotum was measured along midline. Length of elytra was taken from the most advanced part of the humerus to the most advanced part of the apex.

The holotypes are stored in the Australian National Insect Collection, Canberra (ANIC), one paratype is in the working collection of the author in the Zoologische Staatssammlung, München (CBM).

Data of examined material are given in full length and the exact labelling was used, including all ciphers and printed labels. Also original spelling of the collecting date is used. A / with a blank before and after it denotes a new label, two blanks mark a new line on the same label.

Subgenus *Tachyta* s. str.

KIRBY, 1837: 56. – ERWIN 1975: 5.

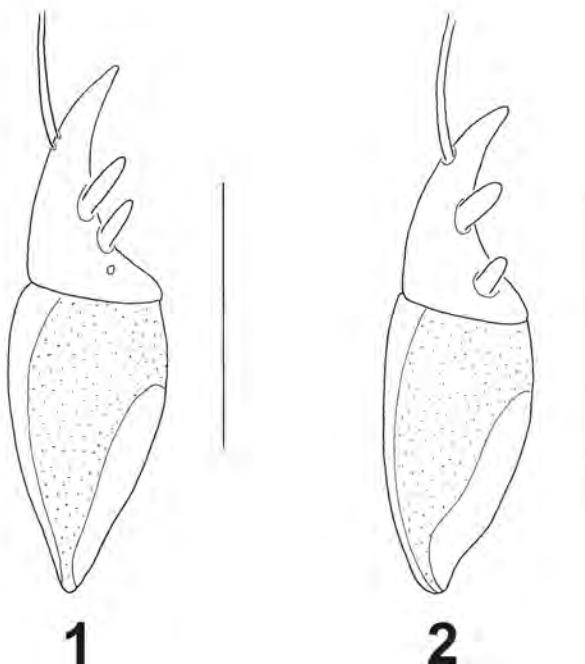
Type species: *Tachyta picipes* KIRBY, 1937 = *Tachyta nana inornata* (SAY, 1823).

***Tachyta alutacea* nov.sp.** (Figs 1, 4)

Holotype ♀: “15.35S 144.30E QLD 7km E of Laura 12Dec. 1992 W. Dressler P. Zborowski, at light” (ANIC).

Etymology: The name refers to the remarkably alutaceous surface.

Diagnosis: Distinguished from all Australian species by extremely dense and alutaceous microreticulation; furtheron from the most similar species *T. brunnipennis* (MACLEAY) by narrower and basad more narrowed pronotum, and longer and more oviform elytra; and from *T. ovata* BAEHR and *T. rexensis* MOORE by narrower pronotum and longer and narrower elytra.



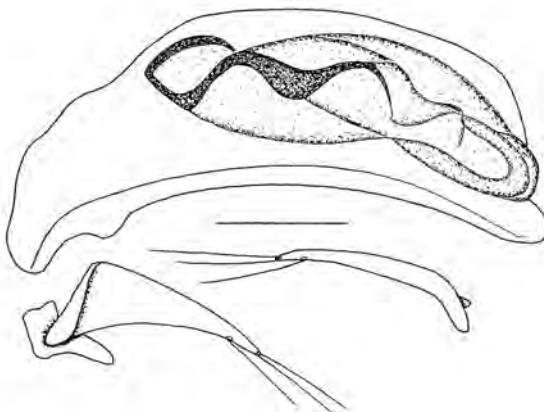
Figs 1, 2. Female gonocoxites Scale bars: 0.1 mm. (1) *Tachyta* (s. str.) *alutacea* nov.sp.; (2) *T. (Australotachyta) punctipennis* nov.sp.

Description:

Measurements: Length: 2.25 mm; width: 0.9 mm. Ratios: width/length of pronotum: 1.49; widest diameter/width of base of pronotum: 1.20; length/width of elytra: 1.60.

Colour: Reddish-brown, antenna reddish, palpi dirty yellow, legs pale reddish.

Head (Fig. 4): Across eyes about as wide as the pronotum at apical angles. Eyes large, laterad well produced, orbits short. Lower surface of eyes and orbits with a few very short hairs. Frons near eyes with a slightly sinuate, oblique ridge, the anterior supraorbital seta situated in a large and deep groove. Antenna short, barely surpassing base of pronotum, median antennomeres about as long as wide. Surface with distinct and coarse, isodiametric to slightly transverse microreticulation, frons and posterior part of clypeus with scattered, rather coarse punctures.



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Fig. 3. *Tachyta (Australotachyta) punctipennis* nov.sp. Male aedeagus (left side) and left and right parameres. Scale bar: 0.1 mm.

Pronotum (Fig. 4): Comparatively narrow, much narrower than the elytra, rather cordiform, widest at anterior two fifths, dorsal surface moderately convex. Apex very gently sinuate, apical angles slightly protruded, but rounded. Lateral margin in anterior half moderately convex, in basal half gently oblique and slightly concave. Basal angles acute, less than 90°, slightly produced laterad and posteriad. Base in middle slightly produced. Apex not bordered, lateral margin with very narrow lateral sulcus, base only laterally bordered. Anterior marginal seta situated at widest diameter, posterior seta located at basal angle. Median line deeply impressed, but incomplete, running from the anterior to the posterior transverse sulcus. Anterior sulcus very shallow, indistinct, posterior sulcus deeply impressed, oblique. Disk with coarse, very distinct, isodiametric microreticulation that becomes slightly more transverse towards the lateral margin. Punctures scattered, coarse, but difficult to detect within the coarse microreticulation.

Elytra (Fig. 4): Comparatively elongate, distinctly oviform, widest slightly behind middle, on disk depressed. Only two median striae very slightly impressed, punctate, other striae distinctly punctate but not impressed, even the 7th stria in middle well recognizable. Anterior discal pore and seta situated immediately inside of the 4th stria and close to the base, clearly in front of the 4th marginal pore and seta. Posterior discal seta likewise situated near the 4th stria, at apical fourth of the elytra. Recurrent stria elongate. Surface with coarse, very distinct, alutaceous microreticulation, remarkably dull. Intervals depressed, with an irregular series of sparse, fairly coarse punctures which are very difficult to detect within the coarse and dense microreticulation. Marginal setae, when present, very elongate.

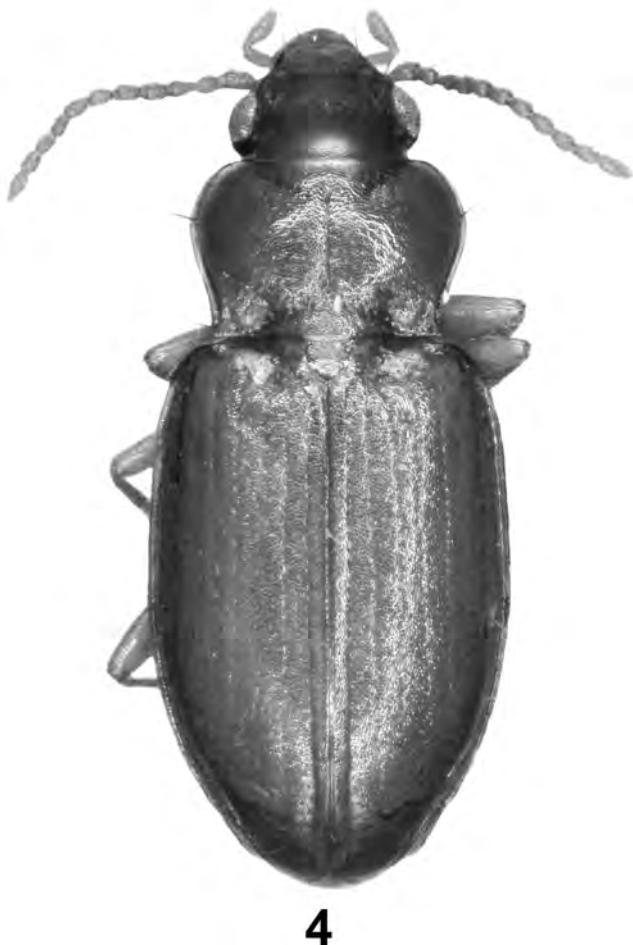


Fig. 4. *Tachyta* (s. str.) *alutacea* nov.sp. Habitus, body length 2.25 mm.

Lower surface: Thoracal sterna and the abdomen with fine, very short, erect pilosity which is slightly denser on the prosternum and on the terminal abdominal sternum. The latter in the female quadrisetose. Metepisternum elongate, about 1.75 x as long as wide at apex.

Male genitalia: Unknown.

Female gonocoxites (Fig. 1): Gonocoxite 1 narrow and elongate, without any setae at the apical margin. Gonocoxite 2 elongate, moderately curved, rather acute at apex, with two

large and elongate ensiform setae situated close together in lower half of the ventro-lateral margin; the upper seta slightly larger than the lower seta; apparently without any ensiform seta in middle of the dorso-median margin; with two very elongate nematiform setae on the median rim in the apical third.

Variation: Unknown.

Distribution: Lower Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland. Known only from the type locality.

Collecting circumstances: The holotype was collected at light, most probably in open forest.

Subgenus *Australotachyta* subgen. nov.

Type species: *Tachyta punctipennis* nov.sp., by present designation.

Diagnosis: Subgenus of the genus *Tachyta* KIRBY, 1837 by virtue of the elongate, oblique, recurrent stria which runs close to the lateral margin of the elytra. Distinguished from both described subgenera (*Tachyta* s. str. and *Paratachyta* ERWIN, 1975) by the dorsally convex elytra, very coarse punctuation of the elytral striae, impunctate intervals, and the unusually elongate terminal palpomeres; from the nominate subgenus also by absence of any microreticulation on the dorsal surface.

Distribution: The single species occurs in the McIlwraith Range in mid Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland, Australia.

***Tachyta punctipennis* nov.sp. (Figs 2, 3, 5, 6)**

Holotype ♂: "13.44S 143.20E QLD 11km WbyN of Bald Hill McIlwraith Range 17 June- 12 July 1989 T.A. Weir 520m search party campsite / Pyrethrum fogging *Pandanus* tree / open forest" (ANIC). – Paratype: 1 ♀, same data (CBM).

Etymology: The name refers to the coarsely punctate elytral striae.

Diagnosis: Distinguished from all other Australian species by the convex elytra, absence of microreticulation, and the very coarse punctuation of the elytral striae.

Description:

Measurements: Length: 2.05-2.10 mm; width: 0.95 mm. Ratios: width/length of pronotum: 1.46-1.47; widest diameter/width of base of pronotum: 1.13; length/width of elytra: 1.39-1.40.



Fig. 5. *Tachyta (Australotachyta) punctipennis* nov.sp. Habitus, body length (2.1 mm).

Colour: Piceous, fore body and lateral margin of the elytra very slightly paler. Labrum and mandibles reddish, antenna and palpi dirty yellow. Femora brownish, tibiae and tarsi pale brown to reddish, apical part of the femora slightly paler than the rest.

Head (Fig. 6): Across eyes very slightly narrower than the pronotum at the apical angles. Eye fairly large, laterad moderately projected, orbit comparatively large, convex. Lower surface of eye and orbit with a few very short hairs. Frons near the eye with a slightly

sinuate, oblique ridge and a deep, transverse groove mediad of the ridge. Antenna short, barely surpassing the base of the pronotum, median antennomeres about as long as wide.



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Fig. 6. *Tachyta (Australotachyta) punctipennis* nov.sp. Head and prothorax.

Palpi large, terminal palpomeres unusually elongate. Surface very glossy, impunctate and without any traces of microreticulation.

Pronotum (Fig. 6): Comparatively narrow, much narrower than elytra, not cordiform, dorsal surface comparatively convex. Apex very gently sinuate, apical angles slightly protruded, but rounded at tip. Lateral margins in anterior half moderately convex, in basal half gently oblique, straight and without perceptible sinuation. Basal angles rectangular, barely produced posteriorly. Base in middle slightly produced. Pronotum widest at anterior two fifths. Apex not bordered, lateral margins with narrow lateral sulcus, base only laterally bordered. Anterior marginal seta situated at widest diameter, posterior seta located at basal angle. Median line deeply impressed, but incomplete, running from the anterior to the angle.

posterior transverse sulcus. Anterior sulcus shallow, posterior sulcus deeply impressed, oblique, with a circular groove in middle, and slightly interrupted near middle. Disk very glossy, impunctate, without microreticulation.

Elytra (Fig. 5): Comparatively short, widest about at middle, reversely oviform, disk comparatively convex. Lateral margins in humeral fourth very faintly serrulate. All striae well visible, even the 8th stria, but only the inner three striae perceptibly impressed in basal two thirds. All striae very coarsely punctate, the inner striae in the basal two thirds, the outer striae only in the basal half; except for the sutural stria all striae disappearing towards apex. Anterior discal pore and seta situated in 4th interval and close to the base, clearly in front of 4th marginal pore and seta. Posterior discal pore and seta likewise situated in the 4th interval, at apical two fifth of the elytra. Recurrent stria elongate, very slightly incurved at end. The four median intervals very gently convex in basal half. Intervals impunctate and without microreticulation, very glossy. Marginal setae, when present, very elongate.

Lower surface: Prosternum in middle with fine, very short, erect pilosity. Abdomen impilose. The terminal abdominal sternum in the male bisetose, in the female quadrisetose. Metepisternum comparatively short, <1.5 x as long as wide at apex.

Male genitalia (Fig. 3): Genital ring triangular. Aedeagus short and stout, lower surface gently concave; apex short, stout, obtusely rounded; internal sac elongate, with an elongate, sinuate and somewhat twisted sclerite in the middle- Both parameres elongate and with 3 elongate setae at the apex, the left one triangular, the right one very narrow.

Female Gonocoxites (Fig. 2): Gonocoxite 1 narrow and elongate, without any setae at the apical margin. Gonocoxite 2 rather elongate, curved, rather acute at apex, with two large and stout ensiform setae situated at middle and near the base of the ventro-lateral margin; the upper seta considerably larger than the lower seta; apparently without any ensiform seta in middle of the dorso-median margin; with two very elongate nematiform setae on the median rim in the apical third.

Variation: Very little variation noted.

Distribution: McIlwraith Range, central Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland.
Known only from the type locality.

Collecting circumstances: Both recorded specimens were fogged from *Pandanus* trees in open forest.

Revised key to the Australian species of the genus *Tachyta* KIRBY

- 1 Dorsal surface with distinct, though in some species rather superficial microreticulation; elytra depressed with far less coarsely punctate striae but with punctate intervals. Subgenus *Tachyta* s. str. 2
- Dorsal surface without microreticulation; elytra moderately convex with very coarsely punctate striae and impunctate intervals. Subgenus *Australotachyta* subgen. nov. *punctipennis* nov.sp.
- 2 Elongate species, ratio length/width of elytra > 1.45; pronotum less wide, ratio width/length < 1.6 3
- Wider and shorter species, ratio length/width of elytra < 1.35, pronotum wider, ratio width/length > 1.65 5
- 3 Surface of pronotum and elytra with distinct to very coarse microreticulation, dull; elytral intervals either with coarse punctures, or without any visible punctures; pronotum laterally more convex and with deeper lateral sinuation 4
- Surface of pronotum and elytra with superficial microreticulation, rather glossy; intervals with fine and sparse punctures; pronotum laterally less convex and with faint lateral sinuation. North-eastern Queensland *palmerstoni* BAEHR, 2006
- 4 Punctures of the elytral intervals distinct and easily visible; microreticulation less coarse; pronotum wider, ratio width/length > 1.58, with wider base; elytra shorter and rather parallel-sided, ratio length/width < 1.5. Eastern Queensland, northern part of Northern Territory, Western Australia north of Great Sandy Desert; southern New Guinea *brunnipennis* (MACLEAY, 1871)
- Punctures of the elytral intervals indistinct and barely visible; microreticulation very coarse, markedly alutaceous; pronotum narrower, ratio width/length < 1.50, with narrower base; elytra longer and distinctly oviform, ratio length/width 1.6. Lower Cape York Peninsula, north-eastern Queensland *alutacea* nov.sp.
- 5 Surface with distinct microreticulation, moderately dull; antenna shorter, median antennomeres as long as wide. Northern part of Northern Territory, adjacent northernmost Western Australia *ovata* BAEHR, 1986
- Surface with superficial microreticulation, rather glossy; antenna longer, median antennomeres clearly longer than wide. North-eastern Queensland *rexensis* MOORE, 2000

Remarks

Both newly described species of *Tachyta* were collected in the Cape York Peninsula in extreme north-eastern Queensland. This area is well known for the large amount of peculiar species. In particular this applies for the Iron and McIlwraith Ranges in the centre of the Peninsula. These rain forest grown mountain ranges are widely isolated in the south and north by tropical open woodland and thus, the faunas of these ranges contain a large number of endemic species, but also some species which have their nearest relatives in south-eastern New Guinea, or even are rather recent immigrants from New Guinea (DARLINGTON 1961, BAEHR 2000). Both new *Tachyta* species, however, seem to be endemic in the areas where they have been sampled.

Unfortunately, the fauna of the Cape York Peninsula still is quite insufficiently recorded despite of some sampling efforts during the previous 30 years. This may be partly due to the difficult conditions for collecting beetles, because during the wet season access by car is almost impossible, whereas the dry season of course is less promising for collecting. Therefore, at present it is impossible to define exactly the distribution of the new species, as well as of many other species known from single or few specimens that occur in the Cape York Peninsula.

Whereas *T. alutacea* probably is closely related to other Australian species (e.g. the widespread *T. brunnipennis*), *T. punctipennis* is a peculiar and systematically very isolated species the relationships of which still are obscure. Additional material of this species, and in general, additional and systematic collecting in the Cape York Peninsula, is needed to settle its distribution and relationships.

The biology of both new species is barely recorded. The single species of *T. alutacea* was collected at light, probably in rather open tropical woodland. The body shape of this species and its probable close relationship with *T. brunnipennis* suggest similar habits under the bark of bark shedding (eucalypt) trees.

The two known specimens of *T. punctipennis* were fogged from *Pandanus* trees, but without information whether they were fogged from the trunk, whether from leaves. At any rate, occurrence of *Tachyta* species in Australia on *Pandanus* is surprising and so far was unknown, and it raises the question about the habits of this species on these trees.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks are due to CATE LEMANN and TOM WEIR (Australian National Insect Collection, Canberra) for the loan of the specimens and for their kind assistance during my recent visit at their institution. I am also indebted to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) for supporting the visit by the grant No. BA 856/11-1.

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Buchbesprechungen

Blösch, M.: **Grabwespen.** Illustrierter Katalog der einheimischen Arten. - NBB Scout, Band 2, Westarp Wissenschaften, Hohenwarsleben, 2012. 219 S.

Grabwespen zeigen ein faszinierendes, hochkomplexes Verhaltenssystem, welches sich in einem komplizierten Fortpflanzungsverhalten, verschiedenen Grabtechniken beim Nestbau, unterschiedlichen Jagdmethoden und diversen Formen des Beutetransportes, des Nestverschließens, der Abwehr von Parasitoiden sowie der Orientierung äußert.

In diesem kompakten Taschenbuch (in der Tat im Taschenformat von 15x11cm) werden alle 246 derzeit aus Deutschland bekannten Arten aufgelistet und mit Farbfotos anhand von 137 ausgewählten Arten (viele davon in beiderlei Geschlecht) dargestellt. Z. T. sind auch Vertreter der weiteren 63 aus Österreich und der Schweiz bekannten Arten berücksichtigt. Da das Hauptverbreitungsgebiet in den wärmeren Zonen nördlich der Alpen liegt, erreichen viele Arten bei uns die nördliche Grenze ihrer Verbreitung. Systematisch werden die Grabwespen (Spheciformes) heute in die drei Familien Ampulicidae, Sphecidae und Crabronidae eingeteilt. Auf eine kurze Einleitung folgt der illustrierte Artenkatalog, dessen Kurzbeschreibungen Kennzeichen, Größe, Flugzeit, Verbreitung, Lebensraum und Lebensweise beinhaltet. Gegebenfalls werden bei bestimmten Gattungen weitere Arten kurz erwähnt.

Als Biologe hätte man sich vielleicht einen Bestimmungsschlüssel zu den Gattungen gewünscht, ansonsten gibt es an diesem fantastischen Büchlein nichts auszusetzen. Eine sehr schöne, kompakte Darstellung dieser auffälligen, aber oft zu wenig berücksichtigten Insektengruppe.

R. Gerstmeier

Cardé, R.T., Resh, V.H. (eds): **A World of Insects.** - Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2012. 404 S.

“A World of Insects” ist von der Aufmachung her kein “eyecatcher”, um einem unbedarften Leser die faszinierende, bunte Welt der Insekten näher zu bringen. Es ist vielmehr ein “Lesebuch” mit sehr wenig Bildern und Grafiken, ausschließlich in Schwarz-Weiß. Das heißt, es wird nur Leser ansprechen, die schon irgendwie einen “Bezug” zu Insekten haben und sich anhand der 20 Themenkreise näher (tiefer) damit beschäftigen wollen. Geschrieben wurden diese einzelnen Kapitel von namhaften Entomologen unserer Zeit, wie Bert Hölldobler, Edward O. Wilson, Mark Winston, Thomas Seeley, Gilbert Waldbauer, Vincent G. Dethier, Bernd Heinrich, Thomas Eisner, Kenneth D. Roeder, Andrew Ross, M. Lee Goft und James T. Costa. Es geht u.a. um die “Faszination zum Studium von Insekten”, Insektengesellschaften (Ameisen, Bienen), gigantische Wanderungen (Monarch), Insektenterror (Killerbienen), Kreaturen der Nacht (Schaben), Insekten in Bernstein, um physiologische Anpassungen und Besonderheiten, Ökologie und Verhalten, letztendlich um alle Außergewöhnlichkeiten, die Insekten so faszinierend

machen. Man kann dieses Buch in einem Stück lesen oder durcheinander kapitelweise, man wird immer wieder überrascht und fasziniert sein.

R. Gerstmeier

Fritzlar, F., Nöllert, A., Westhus, W.: **Rote Listen der gefährdeten Tier- und Pflanzenarten, Pflanzengesellschaften und Biotope Thüringens.** - Naturschutzreport Heft 26, Jena, 2011. 544 S.

Das 26. Heft des Naturschutzreports enthält 54 Rote Listen; insgesamt wurden 16.814 Arten (7.543 Wirbellose Tiere, 315 Wirbeltiere, 3.885 Pflanzen, 5.271 Pilze), 686 Pflanzengesellschaften und 76 Biotoptypen hinsichtlich ihrer Gefährdung erfasst und überprüft. Die 93 beteiligten Autoren sind die besten Kenner der Thüringer Tier- und Pflanzenwelt. Unter dem Strich sind 3.455 Tierarten (45%), 1.903 Pflanzenarten (49%), 1.510 Pilzarten (29%), 351 Pflanzengesellschaften (51%) und 68 Biotoptypen (89%) in Thüringen gefährdet oder bereits ausgestorben. Gegenüber der letzten Erhebung aus dem Jahr 2001 konnten erhebliche Veränderungen festgestellt werden, basierend vor allem auf methodischen Änderungen, einem verbesserten Kenntnisstand und nur zum Teil auf einer geänderten Gefährdungssituation. Positive Entwicklungen wurden bei Fließgewässerarten dokumentiert, die jetzt auf die deutlichen Verbesserungen der Wasserqualität reagieren. Ähnliches gilt bei den Flechten durch Verbesserung der Luftqualität. Erwähnenswert sind aber auch positive Auswirkungen durch konkrete Naturschutzmaßnahmen, die zu einer z.T. deutlichen Verbesserung der Bestandssituation bei u.a. Kleiner Hufeisennase, Fischotter, Luchs, Schwarzstorch, Wanderfalke und Uhu geführt haben. Ausgesprochen kritisch ist die Situation nach wie vor bei Arten, die an Lebensräume der Agrarlandschaft mit extremen Standortbedingungen (wie z.B. sehr trockene, nasse oder nährstoffarme Biotope) gebunden sind.

Ein ebenso informatives wie reichhaltig bebildertes Werk zur gefährdeten Natur in Thüringen, mit hoher fachlicher Kompetenz.

R. Gerstmeier

Estes, R.D.: **The Behavior Guide to African Mammals.** Including hoofed mammals, carnivores, primates. - The University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2012. 611 S.

Konventionelle Naturführer (field guides) dienen im allgemeinen der Identifikation von Arten, ergänzt durch kurze Beschreibungen, Verbreitungskarten und Illustrationen. Verhaltensinformationen finden sich, wenn überhaupt, unter Rubriken wie Habitat, Lebensraum, Lebensweise. Der Schwerpunkt dieses Textbuches liegt somit auf der ausführlichen Beschreibung und (zeichnerischen) Illustration des Verhaltens der häufigeren Säugetiere afrikanischer Naturschutzgebiete.

Afrikas Tierwelt ist geprägt durch seine Megafauna; kein anderer Kontinent lässt den

Reichtum an seiner Tierwelt so offen erkennen wie Afrika, die riesigen Huftierheden mit ihren z.T. extremen Wanderungen, die Räuber und Aasfresser, die von ihnen abhängen, die Vielfalt an durchaus sichtbaren (und damit beobachtbaren) Primaten und Vögeln. Vielen Afrikareisenden ist diese Artenfülle durchaus bewusst, viele mögen auch einen Großteil der Arten kennen. Was meist fehlt, ist das Wissen über das Verhalten der Tiere, welches sich meist nur sehr zerstreut in einschlägigen wissenschaftlichen Zeitschriften findet. Richard Despard Estes hat es sich zur Aufgabe gemacht, dieses Wissen zu extrahieren, zu bündeln, zu erklären und zu illustrieren, um eine breite Leserschaft über das faszinierende Verhaltensrepertoire afrikanischer Säugetiere zu informieren. Dies ist ihm fantastisch gelungen, so dass man die 20-jährige Jubiläumsausgabe jedem empfehlen kann, der eine Reise nach Afrika plant oder nach seiner Rückkehr aufbereitet.

Wer allerdings die Originalausgabe von 1991 besitzt, braucht dieses Buch nicht kaufen; es wurde nichts verändert. Dies ist schade, denn viele neue Erkenntnisse sind inzwischen hinzugekommen und viele Verhaltensweisen haben heute durchaus andere Interpretationen erfahren (z.B. das "stotting" von Gazellen) und in nicht wenigen Fällen dürfte sich auch das Verbreitungsgebiet nicht unerheblich geändert haben. Hier hätte der Verlag eigentlich schon auf ein richtiges "update" bestehen sollen.

R. Gerstmeier

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