

New publication

SUBBA RAO, V. N., 1989. Freshwater Molluscs of India Handbook. Calcutta, Zoological Survey of India, 289 pages, 642 figures and 13 unnumbered figures. In English. Available from Z. S. I. Publication Division, 2nd M. S. O. Building, 13th Floor, 234/4 Acharja J.C. Bose Road, Calcutta 700 020, India. Price - rupees 390.

An important reference work on the rich freshwater mollusc fauna of the Indian Region has been published recently by the Zoological Survey of India. The author, Dr. N. K. SUBBA RAO, is Head of the Mollusca Section Z. S. I., Calcutta. The area of study sensibly encompassed India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Mynmar (=Burma) and Sri Lanka, similar to that of H.B. PRESTONS /1915/. The fauna of British India including Ceylon and Burma. Mollusca, which was the previous general work on the subject. The new publication revises and consolidates all previous work and incorporates much original research.

Readers are provided with a useful and well illustrated introductory section and there are contributions on anatomy, physiology, reproduction, ecology, collection and preservation and classification. It is designed to make the subject more accessible to university students and researchers of most aspects of freshwater molluscan biology. There is an interesting section, coauthored with A. DEY, on ethnographic aspects of freshwater molluscs in village life, in which many species are gathered for sake and



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Figs. 320, 321. *Camptoceras terebra*, 5.5 × 1.30 mm., Mogra, Hooghly Dist., W. Bengal. 322, 323. *C. lineatum* 3.90 mm × 1.95 mm., Dacca, Bangladesh. 324, 325. *C. austeni*, 6.40 × 1.70 mm., Dhaka, Bangladesh.

One page from the book

consumption; pearl harvesting is also discussed. There is an extensive bibliography appended.

Those interested in regional biogeography and evolutionary history and systematics will find little of relevance here. Medical aspects of malacology, which can be of considerable importance in the tropics are not featured though collectors in Indian freshwaters are advised /p.26/.

"i/ Boots should always be used and one should not go bare footed,

ii/ Hands and arms should be repeatedly cleaned with 70 % ethanol, if bare hands are used."

No explanation for these precautions is offered. However health hazards from cercarial, protozoal, bacterial and other elements present in inland waters of the Indian Region, as elsewhere in the tropics, are substantial. Intending collectors there should be quite certain about obtaining the best medical advice beforehand.

The core of the work is a detailed account of 21 families, 62 full genera and 285 species from the Indian Region, of which 200 species are recorded from India proper. Families represented are: Arcidae /one genus/, Unionidae /eight genera/, Amblemidae /six/, Aetheriidae /one/, Margaritiferidae /one/, Corbiculidae /four/, Pisidiidae /two/, Cultellidae /two/, Solecurtidae /one/, Neritidae /four/, Viviparidae /four/, Valvatidae /one/, Piliidae /two/, Littorinidae /one/, Hydrobiidae [=Hydrobiinae + Triculinae + Iravadiinae, three/], Bithyniidae /six/, Stenothyridae /two/, Thiaridae [=Thiarinae + Paludominae + Melanopsinae + Melanatrinae, five/], Lymnaeidae /one/, Ancylidae /one/ and Planorbidae /six/. The Assimineidae are not included. Four species of the rare and unusual planorbid genus *Camptoceras* BENSON are listed, of which three are figured.

Dr. SUBBA RAO has produced a work of substance, which can be recommended for the library of every freshwater malacologist.

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