

BOOK REVIEW

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MASSEMIN, D., D. LAMY, J.-P. POINTIER & O. GARGOMINY, 2009. Coquillages et escargots de Guyane. Seashells and snails from French Guiana. Biotope, Mèze/Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris: 1-456, [many, partly numbered] text-figs, plates and maps, indices. French/English. ISBN 978-2-914817-18-9 (Biotope)/978-2-85653-637-7 (MNHN). Approx. € 70.

The Neotropical malacofauna is very diverse, but in general still lacks comprehensive publications that shed light on the biodiversity of this continent. Therefore this book on French Guiana - treating both the marine, freshwater and land molluscs - is a welcome contribution.

This book is composed of two parts. In the first part, a general introduction is given to the different groups of molluscs and their habitats in French Guiana. This part is in French only. The second, bilingual, part starts with an illustrated glossary of the main characters of the several mollusc groups and provides a key to these. In separate chapters the marine, freshwater and land species are treated in a taxonomic way. For each group a key to the families is presented. Subsequently, each family is briefly characterized and for each species the scientific name is given, as well as information on size, ecology, distribution, status in French Guiana and references. Most species are illustrated with photographs; additional line drawings show the characteristics of many taxa. In the chapters on freshwater and land snails, maps show the occurrence of each species with red dots. In these chapters also many additional photographs are given of living animals. A list of references and 'patrimonial' (not necessarily equalling endemic) species for French Guiana, as well as indices to taxon names complement the book.

This book treats many species that have a wider distribution than French Guiana. The chapters on land and freshwater molluscs are complementary to the recent book of

Simone on the non-marine species of Brazil and adjacent areas. The keys and maps make the information in this book more accessible and the field work of the authors is reflected in the data on several species. It is, however, not always clear whether a species is endemic to French Guiana or to the Guyanas (including Suriname and Guyana); some species are indicated as 'espèce patrimoniale' while it is stated that they have a wider distribution (e.g. *Labyrinthus* species). As a map showing all localities mentioned in French Guiana is not provided, it is not clear to which extent the distribution maps reflect the 'true' distribution. In other words, it is difficult to ascertain which areas have been under-sampled and may explain some of the remarkable gaps in distribution of species (e.g. p. 391: *Alcaldia kuehni*). There are some minor taxonomic errors, e.g. *Nesopupa maasseni* instead of *N. maasseni* (with the exception of the legend on p. 32).

Most marine molluscs have a geographical range that is not restricted to the Guyana coast (part of Venezuela, Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana, Amapa region of Brazil) but extend over the whole Caribbean province, including the Gulf of Mexico. For several species it is even uncertain whether they occur in Guyana. Although the colour photographs are very clear and will be of great help with identifying the collected shells it will be problematic that many species are illustrated only with a very simple line drawing, because the book gives no information about shell characters and colour. So other literature is needed for identification of these species. Maybe the references that are given with each species will be helpful. Lacking shell descriptions causes also another problem. Two specimens are pictured with the name *Fissurella rosea* (p. 75) but they differ considerably from each other. In the absence of an explanation of these differences it will be no surprise if there is uncertainty about the correctness of the nomenclature.

The identification keys make this book a very practical guide to the malacofauna of northeastern South America. Very clear photographs of nearly each species and the line drawings showing the characters of species should help to identify specimens relatively easily. The lay-out makes this a very attractive book for every malacologist interested in this part of the world.