

Anschriften der Autoren

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New Books – Neue Bücher

WOLFF, D.; GEBEL, M. & GELLER-GRIMM, F. (2018): Die Raubfliegen Deutschlands. Entdecken – Beobachten – Bestimmen. Quelle & Meyer Verlag, Wiebelsheim, Germany; Hardcover 12 × 19 cm, 344 pages, more than 400 coloured images, 6 tables; ISBN 978-3-494-01733-4; German language; Price: 24,95 Euro.



WOLFF, GEBEL & GELLER-GRIMM have published a first-class book on the German fauna of robber flies (Diptera: Asilidae). Rarely do taxonomists, photographers and nature lovers all agree on the excellence of a book, but this book by WOLFF, GEBEL & GELLER-GRIMM is not only superb in its coverage of all aspects of this group of flies, but is also helpful and necessary. It is helpful because the authors provide all the details needed to understand these flies, their biology and habitats. It is necessary because it makes possible for everyone to appreciate and understand biodiversity in Germany, and this is the best way we have to protect and preserve our natural environment.

Although its compact format is perfect to take into the field, the book lacks nothing in detail. There is a general introduction to Diptera (two-winged insects), a precise presentation of the family Asilidae with hints on how to recognize them, followed by a morphological diagram and a general habitus picture in order to show the body parts of these insects used in the identification key that follows (pages 13–20). Then, the reader will

find, what is, in my opinion, one of the most delightful parts of the book, the history of the study of the robber flies in Germany (pages 20–27). This historical background brings everyone, experts and beginners, to the same point, to continue with the current systematics of this fly group. There are few examples where a book explains so clearly each of the subfamilies and species groups within an insect family (pages 27–39).

There are many smaller details that make this book an example of excellence. There is a complete list of German species with scientific names and German names, a clear explanation of the meaning of each Latin or Greek name (pages 41–54), details of the flight period and the habitat for each species and their importance and role in the ecosystems. Coloured diagrams are used to explain the life cycle of this group, and beautiful and effective images illustrate how robber flies behave (pages 54–112).

The authors share their own experiences of two different and essential fields of insect study; the collection and preservation of flies, and their photography (pages 112–127). The identification key (pages 128–156) which follows has many illustrations and photos, which make the identification an easy task. This is a well-written and illustrated part of the book that, very importantly, will support the broad community of fly-lovers and naturalists. Each robber fly species has a fully detailed page with a distribution map, the distinguishing features, and details of their biology and habitat preference. There are also beautiful photographs of the species and its habitat (pages 157–321).

The list of useful literature given for further reading also has notes on the subjects covered, i.e. whether the work deals with the biology, the systematics or phylogeny, or the identification of this fly family. Finally, in case all of this was not sufficient, the authors also included a very complete glossary and a list of abbreviations.

The work of WOLFF et al. is a ‘must’ for professionals and citizen-scientists. The only trouble with ‘Die Raubfliegen Deutschlands’ is that readers will demand the same level of quality for books on other groups of insects, and this may be difficult to achieve! I am sure that this book will become an inspiration for many nature lovers to work on insects and to learn about their ‘Umwelt’.

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