

Book Review

Free-living Marine Nematodes. Part 1 British Enoplids

No 28, Synopses of the British Fauna (New Series) edited by
Doris M. Kermack and R.S.K. Barnes.

H.M. PLATT and R.M. WARWICK

Cambridge University Press, London, 1983
307 pp.
Local price about R145

This is the first of three volumes dealing with the most abundant group of animals on the sea-bed and sea-shore, the free-living marine nematodes, and is devoted to those marine nematodes belonging to the subclass Enoplia. Separate volumes will deal with the orders Chromadorida and Monhysterida.

To most marine biologists the nematode component of their samples is an embarrassment, often appearing as 'unidentified worms' in reports. With this quotation by the editors I agree.

For these marine biologists and also nematologists this first published volume is a 'must'. Of the 307 pages, 50 pages are devoted to a simple annotated pictorial key to the world genera which enables both the specialist and non-specialist to identify the different nematode genera likely to be encountered. The pictorial key enables the user to evaluate visually several characters and character combinations simultaneously. The key is followed by a section of almost 200 pages of detailed drawings and descriptions of enoplid species recorded from the British Isles. The subclass Enoplia (i.e. enoplids) includes the largest species of marine nematodes which are encountered frequently in general faunistic studies.

In addition this book contains a general introduction to nematode structure, biology, classification, collection, extraction and preservation.

This volume is without doubt one of the most important synopses on the enoplids ever published and is indispensable to anyone with an interest in this field of study. It is claimed by the editors to be up to date and to contain many new and previously unpublished drawings, including some hitherto little-known or poorly described species.

It has been my pleasure to review this book (222 mm × 140 mm) and I enthusiastically recommend it — an outstanding reference book by Howard Platt and Richard Warwick. They are to be congratulated on their achievement. However, this is an expensive book, partly because there are not many marine nematologists. The cost of Volume 1 could place it out of the reach of many individuals.

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