

## Fishes of the North-Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean / Poissons de l'Atlantique du Nord-Est et de la Méditerranée

Edited by P. J. P. Whitehead, M.-L. Bauchot, J.-C. Hureau, J. Nielsen, and E. Tortonese. 1984. UNESCO, Paris. Volume I. 510 pp., illus. 250 FF.

This is the first of three volumes of *Fishes of the north-eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean* (FNAM), the long awaited authoritative ichthyofauna of the marine fishes of Europe. It is the progeny of Clofnam: "Check-list of the fishes of the north-eastern Atlantic and of the Mediterranean." The geographic area covered by FNAM extends from eastern Greenland to Europe, north and east to Spitzbergen and western Novaya Zemlya, and south to 30° N including the Azores, Madeira, most of Morocco, all of the Mediterranean, and the Black and Caspian seas.

FNAM is divided into a Foreword (by Théodore Monod), Editor's Note, List of Contributors (73 scientists), List of Families (for all 3 volumes), Key to Families (in all 3 volumes), and 64 family accounts with contained species — Petromyzonidae to Anopteroptidae. Volume II will contain families Mirapinnidae to Xiphiidae, and III Gobiidae to Linophrynidae plus references supplemental to Clofnam, and indices to common and scientific names.

The key to families usually uses one or two characters per couplet. Except at the class level, the key does not attempt to be phylogenetic and some families key out in more than one place which should facilitate identification of polymorphic families. A useful feature is the inclusion of headings in the body of the key, e.g. Hagfishes, lampreys; Bony fishes; Pelvic fins absent; Adipose fins and photophores present. This will permit the user with experience to skip the beginning of a series of couplets and arrive more quickly at an identification. Outline drawings are given for each family in the key, but there are only three text-figures to illustrate key characters.

A typical family account is composed as follows. The scientific name of the family is followed by the author of the account and vernacular names in English, French, Spanish and sometimes Russian and German. Two paragraphs follow, one giving a morphological description and the second a summary of the biology of the family. The number of world and Clofnam area genera is listed and recent revisions are cited. Keys to genera and species may be combined or separated; keys usefully give page numbers of species accounts. Figures may be included to explain characters such as location of photophores and shape of teeth.

Following a generic name heading is a short description of the genus, the number of world and Clof-

nam area species, common synonyms and vernacular names. Species accounts contain a Diagnosis (diagnostic characters, colour, usual and maximum size). Habitat (plus food and reproduction), and Distribution paragraphs. Some have in addition a Note which will explain differences in nomenclature from Clofnam or indicate unresolved taxonomic problems.

A black-and-white drawing about 2/3 of the page wide and a spot or shaded range map 1/3 of the page wide accompanies each species account. The drawings, supplied by the different authors, vary in style, but most are of acceptable quality. The maps are small (4 cm deep) and some give spot distributions but most use various types of hatching to describe distributions in general terms.

The taxonomic names are up-to-date although displaying a moderate conservatism. Some literature is missed. Under Recent revisions for *Coregonus*, Reshetnikov (1980) is listed but Svardson's (1979) major study is ignored. Common names are those adopted by FAO; these not infrequently differ from North American usage, viz. FNAM usage of starry skate and raie radiée for *Raja radiata*, instead of thorny skate and raie épineuse. It would be worthwhile to make an effort to standardize common names of widespread species.

The high standard of the contributions and editing observed in Clofnam has been maintained. The reader is supplied with a well-organized, authoritative, and highly readable text. When the volumes are complete the reader will be able to identify 1256 species in 218 families and will have, on average, a half-page summary of information on each species. There is a fair amount of blank space on many pages. Some of this could have been used to include more text, but perhaps that would have sacrificed esthetics. It would have been useful to have each author's contribution dated so that in a few years readers will know the period that has elapsed since literature on the taxon was summarized. Some families may have been completed several years earlier than others and are therefore less up to date. Modern systematics moves quickly!

The typography, page design and matte paper are esthetically pleasing. The plasticized blue cover is water resistant. The signatures appear to be glued together rather than sewn, which does not promise well for the durability of the binding.

This is a major contribution to European and world ichthyology. The contributors, editors and Unesco are to be congratulated, especially editors who had to ride herd over a multiplicity of personalities.



**Literature Cited**

Svardson, G. 1979. Speciation of Scandinavian *Coregonus*. Institute of Freshwater Research Drottningholm (57): 1-95.

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**BOTANY****Past and Present Vegetation of the Far Northwest of Canada**

By J. C. Ritchie. 1984. University of Toronto Press, Toronto. 251 pp., illus. \$35.00.

This book treats only a small part of northwestern Canada. This part, however, is most interesting because a large portion was left unglaciated during the Wisconsin glaciation. The area extends roughly from 65°40'N, north to the Arctic Coast and from 127°40'W west to the Alaskan border and encompasses some 220 000 square kilometers. It is not an area of easy access.

The author has brought together the results of his own and his students' 15 years of field work in the area plus those of other workers. He has termed the book "a status report on 15 years of research into the historical plant ecology of northwest Canada".

The book is divided into seven chapters, most of which are again subdivided: (1) Introduction; (2) The physical setting (climate, geology, permafrost and periglacial features, and physiographic regions); (3) Vascular plant floristics; (4) Modern vegetation (Beringian vegetation zones and Present vegetation of Northwest Canada); (5) Vegetation history (Tertiary origins, Early and middle Pleistocene, and Late Pleistocene and Holocene record); (6) Palaeoenvironmental reconstruction (The full- and late-glacial vegetation, The early Holocene period, and The late Holocene alder rise and subsequent stability; and (7) Current problems and future trends (Ecological

implications of the palaeobotanical record, Topographic diversity and palaeoecology, and For the future). Appendices include (1) a listing of the vascular plants that have been recorded for the study area; (2) tabular summaries of the vegetation composition of the main community types; (3) field and laboratory methods; and (4) a listing of the radiocarbon age determinations of samples taken. A collection of 28 plates that illustrate physiographic features and vegetation types, a list of references and an index complete the volume. The plates would have been better if they had been printed on glossy paper.

From his studies, Dr. Ritchie has been able to question the hypothesis of a grassland vegetation in north Yukon and to suggest on the basis of the pollen record "that at least in eastern Beringia the herb zone represents a sparse, discontinuous vegetation of herbaceous tundra on upland sites and local sedge-grass meadows on lowlands". This is a most important contribution to our knowledge of the region. He has also been able to suggest new lines of investigation that might be followed to further understand the vegetational history of the region.

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**Our Green and Living World: The Wisdom to Save It**

By E. S. Ayensu, V. H. Heywood, G. L. Lucas, and R. A. DeFilipps. 1984. Cambridge University Press. 256 pp., illus. U.S. \$24.95.

I have been looking for a book like this for years. Here for popular reading is a reliable introduction to the world's major regions of vegetation and to man's uses and abuses of them. Here also are brief accounts crammed with interesting facts on the importance of plants to man's welfare. To characterize the book in a sentence, it is a readable, informative, and well illustrated account of man and plants, which is presented

with a deep concern for the future of both that is based on world wide knowledge and understanding.

Standing in the background behind this book's message are two world-oriented organizations by far the best informed on Earth's natural history: the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Richly published by Cambridge University Press to mark its 400 years of continuous publishing, it was co-published in Washington by the Smithsonian Institution which is the largest museum and science organization in the world.





McAllister, Don E. and Coad, Brian W. 1986. "Fishes of the North-Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean/ Poissons de l'Atlantique du Nord-Est et de la Méditerranée, eds. P. J. P. Whitehead, M.-L. Bauchot, J.-C. Hureau, J. Nielsen and E. Tortonese [Review]." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 100(1), 152–153.  
<https://doi.org/10.5962/p.355571>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/89211>

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