

BOOK REVIEWS

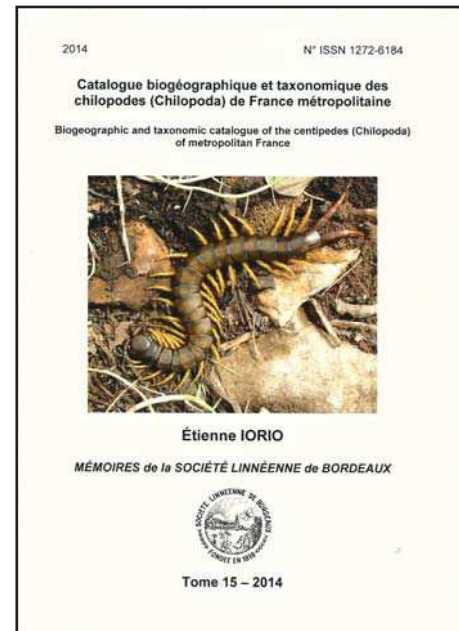
CATALOGUE BIOGÉOGRAPHIQUE ET TAXONOMIQUE DES CHILOPODES (CHILOPODA) DE LA FRANCE MÉTROPOLITAINE

Biogeographic and taxonomic catalogue of the centipedes (Chilopoda) of Metropolitan France.

Etienne Iorio. *Mémoires de la Société Linnéenne de Bordeaux*. Tome 15 – 2014. €25.

Pp. 1 – 372; in French with an introduction in English. Colour plates of selected species and distribution maps by départements.

Reference has already been made in a recent *BMIG Newsletter* (Barber, 2015) to this account of the French centipede fauna (including that of Corsica) which seems, to a substantial extent, replace both H.W.Brölemann's *Chilopodes* in the *Faune de France* series (1930) as the standard account of the chilopod fauna of that country and the chilopod section of *Les Mille-pattes* of J.-M.Demange (1981). However, what this volume does not contain is either keys or descriptions of the species. For the French Lithobiomorpha, the author has already published an admirable illustrated dichotomous key with a tabular summary of characteristics (Iorio, 2010) and, with J.-J. Geoffroy, accounts of the Scolopendromorpha (Iorio & Geoffroy, 2008, etc.). The latter have also written on the geographical distribution of *Scutigera coleoptrata* (Iorio & Geoffroy, 2007) so that for the present, only the Geophilomorpha of that country lack an adequate modern key; Demange's account of the centipedes is very largely a copy of that of Brölemann. For those wishing to refer to it, Brölemann's work is now available on line at: www.faunedefrance.org/bibliothequevirtuelenumerique.



Following the introductory material is a section on “généralités, écologie et éthologie” – soil arthropods, abiotic & biotic factors, reproductive strategies, phenology, altitudinal distribution, vertical distribution in soil & litter, temporal occurrence in habitats, prey, predators and parasites, principal habitats and their species cohorts, the importance of microhabitats for chilopods and the possibility of centipedes as good bio-indicators. Two pages on references for identification and on capture methods are followed by a list of départements with the authors who have recorded any species from each. The list of nearly 150 valid species recorded from France (including Corsica) contains one scutigermorph (*Scutigera coleoptrata*), 68 lithobiomorphs (of which two are henicopids), ten scolopendromorphs (two *Scolopendra*, eight *Cryptops* species) and 68 geophilomorphs from six families. This compares with not much more than 50 species recorded from Britain and is accounted for by the much greater area, climatic and altitudinal range and diversity of habitats of France (along with the fact that Corsica is included).

Following the accounts of species there is a list of endemic (28), sub-endemic (32) and “locally endemic” (29) species and of the numbers of species recorded for each département, of which the greatest is 69 for Alpes-Maritimes. The author then divides the country into regions and their species cohorts: Continental, Atlantic, Alpine, Pyreneean, Mediterranean. He also lists some 19 species “sensibles” i.e. sensitive / under threat. The series of distribution maps by département shows areas from which the species has been recorded since 1980, those with pre-1980 records only, those from which a record is uncertain or doubtful and those pre-1980 records where, despite searches, the

species not been rediscovered and where it is potentially extinct or in decline in the département concerned. Although, in some ways, it might have been helpful for these maps to be included with each species account, having them all together makes comparison easier.

The species accounts make up the bulk of the book and include, in many cases, introductory notes e.g. on nomenclature followed by an account of the wider distribution together with notes on the ecology including a table of main habitats from which it has been recorded. This is followed by a département by département listing with locations and references and one finds oneself dipping into these reports, not just for their general interest, but for comparison of what we know about the species in Britain and Ireland. For instance, we see *Lithobius tricuspis*, which in Britain is mostly known only from South Devon and South Wales, occurring in pre- and post-1980 records across most of France from south to north and from east to west and *L. piceus* which we know from SE England and South Wales similarly. *L. forficatus*, not unexpectedly occurs right across the country (doubtful in Corsica), *L. pilicornis* only, it seems in the north-west and south and *L. variegatus* very much on the western fringe with records from only four départements.

Lithobius erythrocephalus is shown to be doubtfully or pre-1980 from the extreme south-east, tending to confirm its doubtful occurrence in Britain but, unexpectedly, *L. borealis* is reported from only nine départements despite being widespread in Britain and *Henia brevis* from only from Alpes-Maritimes and Corsica.

A book to look into and to return to, not only if collecting species in France, but for giving a wider perspective to our own fauna both in similarities and differences and for insights into issues relating to the centipede fauna of both countries such as rarity status and threats (as well as comparative ecology, etc.).

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