

Book review



Red Data Book of Fauna of Serbia IV – Orthoptera

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The fourth monograph in the series “Red Data Books of Fauna of Serbia” **Red Data Book of Fauna of Serbia IV – Orthoptera** is devoted to the Orthoptera insect order. It is the first publication of this type focusing on the protection of the Orthoptera on the territory of Europe. The aim of this publication is to highlight the necessity of comprehensive protection of the Orthoptera in the Republic of Serbia, with special emphasis on 35 most threatened taxa (18% of the registered fauna).

The importance of the Orthoptera order, with 27,500 species described worldwide and 1,082 of them found in Europe, is widely recognized. Regarding the latter number, it needs to be emphasized that 739 species are endemic, with 290 of these found in the Balkan Peninsula. This region is home to 44% of European Orthoptera fauna, including 475 species (310 cricket and the 165 grasshopper species).

The authors have decided to dedicate this monograph to the late Prof. Mladen Karaman (1937-1991) whose research scope mostly focused on the Orthoptera of the Balkan Peninsula.

The monograph successfully covers and interprets data from relevant literature and personal experience on regulations and standards of bioconservation and on Serbian Orthoptera flora with special emphasis on the status of 45 endangered species. Most of the data are personal, i.e. gathered by the authors themselves, which gives special value to this publication.

Thirty-four taxa (species/subspecies) have been assigned a threatened category status: four as critically endangered, three endangered, and 27 as vulnerable. One taxon has disappeared from the Serbian fauna and is classified as regionally extinct and 10 taxa are given the “near threatened” category status. The above numbers suggest that more atten-

tion should be paid to regulating the anthropogenic impact on the habitat of the threatened taxa.

Dedicated not only to experts in the field but to a wide readership, the monograph is written in a clear and comprehensible way. The text structure and style are coherent and well balanced, making it easily read and comprehended. Since the main objective of the monograph is to describe and analyze the Orthoptera, a group of insects that are, as it is the case with most invertebrates, usually unknown to the majority of people, the special value of this monograph is also in its abundance of photographs taken in natural environment and the maps of insect distribution. These are certainly valuable sources of information to young entomologists and all nature lovers for recognizing this group of insects and disseminating information on their protection.

As Orthoptera species are tightly connected to specific types of habitats, their conservation mainly implies permanent conservation of these habitats, including the protection of accompanying flora and fauna elements that may also be under threat, as stated by the authors. The most threatened Orthoptera taxa and those being on the verge of extinction in Serbia are found in 14 habitat subtypes (According to the classification by Blažencić et al. 2005). Most of these (14 taxa) are found in dry grasslands, i.e. woodland fringes and clearings and tall forb habitats, while 12 taxa dwell in alpine and subalpine grasslands. A number of anthropogenic activities cause degradation and destruction of habitats important for Serbian Orthoptera biodiversity. The greatest risk factor is the habitat fragmentation due to agricultural land conversion, burning, melioration and illegal rubbish dumping. Mesophile Orthoptera species are endangered by deforestation, while some mountain taxa are threatened by hotels and ski resorts construction. The authors particularly emphasize the

necessity to protect areas such as Stara Planina Mountain where endemic taxa have been registered.

This monograph is undoubtedly a significant contribution to the knowledge of the present state of the Orthoptera fauna in Serbia. It contributes to the dissemination of knowledge regarding the status of the Orthoptera, as one of just a few groups of insects on the territory of Serbia that have

been thoroughly studied and described. In that regard the monograph is a worth addition to previous publications in the series “Red Data Books of Fauna of Serbia”.

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