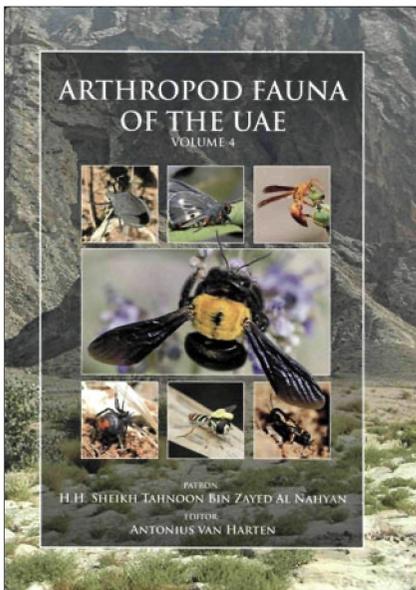




New Books – Neue Bücher

VAN HARTEN, A. (2011) (ed.): **Arthropod fauna of the UAE, Volume 4.** – Abu Dhabi, UAE: Dar Al Ummah Printing, Publishing, Distribution & Advertising, 832 pp.; ISBN 978-9948-16-116-5. E-mail: info@daralummah.ae. Price: in UAE, 100 Dirham; in Europe: € 46,00 or £ 40.50.



With the publication of volume 4, on 31 May 2011, the 'Arthropod fauna of the UAE' has again moved closer towards the final goal of the UAE Insect Project, which is to catalogue and document the regional arthropod fauna at the level of species, and as completely as possible, within a reasonable time. After glancing at the book, which comprises more than 800 pages, one begins to wonder how many more tomes as large as this fourth one will follow before the project's goal is attained. The reader, while marvelling at the amazingly rich biodiversity in a region that due to its extreme aridity seems to be so hostile to life, cannot yet see any signs of completion, either in the numbers of newly found taxa or in the enthusiasm of the 160 taxonomic contributors. The statistics of volumes 1–4 are impressive: of the 251 families of arthropods treated, 142 were previously not known to occur in the UAE; 1809 species have been recorded from the UAE for the first time; and 333 species (including

a few subspecies) have been described as new to science. Both the sponsor of this project, H. H. Sheikh TAHOON BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN, and the scientific coordinator and editor, Antonius VAN HARTEN, have reason to be more than satisfied with, and proud of these results.

Nevertheless, the community of taxonomic contributors has recently been informed by Antonius VAN HARTEN that the sponsor will cease providing financial support for the project, now that the fourth volume of the 'Fauna' has appeared. This means that the series of books, which is planned to comprise a total of six volumes, will, sadly, remain incomplete. The two volumes that are still to appear are scheduled to cover an additional 120 chapters on a broad range of arthropod families, which is almost one-third of all the families collected by the project since August 2004. However, there is still some hope of finding alternative funding so that the UAE Insect Project – so far nothing but a success story – may yet be brought to a happy conclusion. An incomplete and unhappy conclusion would send the wrong signal just at the beginning of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011–2020!