BOOK REVIEWS

D.T. Gwynne, 2001. *Katydid and Bush-Crickets, reproductive behavior and evolution of the Tettigoniidae*. – Cornell University Press, Ithaca. 317 p. 149 figs, 18 tables, 4 colour plates, cloth. ISBN: 0-8014-3655-9. To be ordered via <http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu>. Price USD 42.50.

The Tettigoniidae are one of the most species rich of the 28 families of Orthoptera, with over 6000 species described. They are called bush-crickets in Europe and katydids in North-America, Australia and New Zealand. Tettigoniidae are beautiful and conspicuous insects, but that is not the reason why they are chosen as the subject for this book.

The general chapters on diversity & evolution, biology and the songs are thorough and interesting, but it is clear that they are just the teasers. The main course is formed by the chapters on evolutionary biology and sexual selection, for which Tettigoniidae are well suited as guinea pigs. During courtship the male attaches the sperm capsule on the outside of the female genital tract. The capsule is surrounded by a gelatinous mass, the spermatophylax, on which the female feeds. The function of the spermatophylax seems to be twofold. It serves to protect the sperm capsule and it supplies the female (and sometimes the offspring) with nutrients. As the size of the spermatophylax can be altered experimentally, this is a very important study tool. The spermatophylax can weigh up to one third of the male body weight. In the animal world this is an unusually big investment in the offspring, which can result in a rare sexual role reversal, where females compete for males.

European readers could object to the large numbers of American and Australian examples (with a leading part for the mormon cricket *Anabrus simplex*).

However, most studies have been done in these continents and, as the focus is on general themes in evolution biology, this does not really matter. With this book Darryl Gwynne has written the first comprehensive account of the Tettigoniidae and all in the day's work provides us with a fascinating view on work on the frontiers in evolutionary biology.
[Roy Kleukers]