

Book review

ZETTLER, M.L., & P. GLÖER, 2006. Zur Ökologie und Morphologie der Sphaeriidae der Norddeutschen Tiefebene. *Heldia* 6, Sonderheft 8: 1-61, pls 1-18. ISSN 0932-4143. € 52.

Nearly two years ago, July 2006, a review was published on the ecology and morphology of the Sphaeriidae of the lowlands of northern Germany. This publication, in German, what might restrict the circle of readership, is a must for everyone interested in European freshwater molluscs, especially bivalves. The monograph, as it may be called, starts with an overview of the ecology of the sphaeriids in the research area. Fifteen habitat types are described and illustrated with photographs of characteristic localities. Overviews of the relative abundance of the sphaeriids in those ecosystems are added. In the next chapter, 5 *Sphaerium* species, 2 *Musculium* species, and 17 *Pisidium* species are dealt with. For every species, the original name and its type locality are cited. After an indication of the general distribution, the occurrence in the research area is explained in detail. The morphology of the shells is described and diagnostic characters are mentioned separately. At several places discussions about uncertainties are added, indicating where future studies might start.

The authors apparently had a large amount of material at their disposal. Therefore, I only regret that controversial views on the status of some forms, that could be elucidated or solved with molecular methods, are only discussed on the basis of morphological and ecological data. DNA sequencing could have contributed substantially to remove the final (?) traces of doubts about the status as separate species of *Sphaerium nucleus*, *S. ovale* and *S. scaldianum*, and *Pisidium crassum*, *P. globulare* and *P. ponderosum*. Morphology has been and will always be of the utmost importance, but in these cases data from other sources are needed to tell a more convincing story. I fully realise however, that DNA sequencing, which is neither modern, difficult or expensive anymore, still takes time, which is not always available.

Maybe the most surprising aspect of this valuable monograph is, quite unexpectedly, the very attractive coloured photographs of sphaeriid shells, which are not really known as coloured beauties. Only occasionally, the fine surface sculpture cannot be clearly seen. Nearly all SEM photos are also very useful.

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