

Book Review

The Cicadas of Thailand, Volume 2. Taxonomy and Sonic Ethology

by Michel Boulard

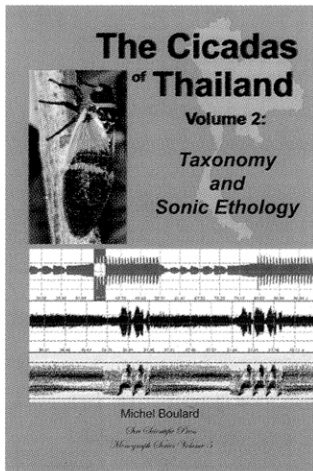
436 pages, 384 B/W photos, line drawings and sonograms (soundtracks available online),
97 colour plates with 400 photos, 24.5 × 17 cm. Hard-cover.

Siri Scientific Press, 2013; in English.

ISBN 978-0-9567795-9-5

Obtainable from Siri Scientific Press <books@siriscientificpress.co.uk>; cost £120.00 (plus p/p).

Further details online at: <<http://www.siriscientificpress.co.uk>>.



It is my pleasure to introduce a new comprehensive and very impressive book devoted to the cicadas of Thailand to the readers of *Antenna*. It is the fifth volume of the continuing monograph series produced by Siri Scientific Press under the general editorship of David Penney. The book represents a 436 page volume from the leading world expert on Cicadomorpha, resulting from 13 years of his work on the taxonomy and behavioural ecology of cicadas in Thailand. It is a sequel to the preceding book by the same author devoted to general characteristics of Thai cicadas published by White Lotus Publishers (Bangkok) in 2007. The reviewed book starts with two Prefaces (in English and French, pp. 5–6), a list of Contents (p. 7), followed unexpectedly by Lists of all the figures included in the volume (384 in total; pp. 8–10), colour plates (97 in total; pp. 10–11) and audio tracks (109 in total; p. 11). The main part of the book (pp. 14–335) consists of three Chapters, Conclusions, Endnotes to the chapters, References and two Appendices.

Chapter 1 (pp. 14–16) provides a brief description of the studied region, including the provinces of Thailand visited by the author (22 field trips between March 2000 and December 2011), technical details on how sound recording was done and a very brief morphological characteristic of cicadas. Unfortunately, there is no information on a depository (or depositories) of the studied material; one can only suspect that the studied collections are mainly preserved

in the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris as mentioned for the types of newly described species (see below). Chapter 2 (pp. 17–20) provides a simplified classification of Thai cicadas based, as the author noted in the previous chapter (p. 15), on "a conventional schema that is accessible to all". No reference to this schema has been provided and thus it is unclear whether it is a personal author's view, which seems to be the case, or a conventionally accepted opinion. The studied species are classified in two subfamilies, Cicadinae (tymbal cover present) and Cicadettinae (tymbal cover absent), with three tribes in each; one tribe (Cryptotympanini) is designated with a new taxonomic status. The subfamily Cicadinae is also subdivided in 15 subtribes, of which two (Aolina and Balintina) are erected as new. In my opinion, it would be useful if this Chapter also included an identification key, at least to subtribes, and comparative illustrations of the characters discussed to make it indeed accessible to all. Chapter 3 (pp. 20–316) is the main section of the book containing detailed accounts of 42 genera, 6 tribes, 15 subtribes and 143 species studied, of which 78 species were discovered and described by the author (a very impressive score indeed!). Every (sub)tribe and genus are provided with taxonomic diagnoses, plus synonymy lists for the genera. Each species account consists of the following subsections: synonymy list, distribution in Thailand, brief morphological description, main measurements of both sexes and ethological notes. The latter are particularly comprehensive, giving lots of original information about the species' biology and particularly its sonic communication; acoustic identity cards of all species are illustrated and described in detail. The value of all this information for new generations of cicada students can hardly be underestimated, especially as the soundtracks of 109 species can be freely accessed via the site of Siri Scientific Press, online at: <http://www.siriscientificpress.co.uk/Pages/ThaiCicadaSoundtracks.aspx>. Taxonomic accounts of newly described species are more detailed and additionally include the information on the depository of the type specimens, etymology for the new name and separate morphological descriptions of male holotypes and female allotypes; both sexes are photographed, but only male genitalia are illustrated. A total of eight new species from three genera are described in this work: *Abroma* (1 species), *Huechys* (1) and *Pomponia* (5). The Conclusion section (pp. 317–318) summarises the previous content of the volume and the state of the knowledge of cicada fauna of Thailand. Unfortunately, there is no comparison of this fauna with those of neighbouring regions and no estimate on how many unrecorded cicada species are likely to occur in Thailand. The reference list (pp. 322–331) includes 233 works, of which 55 were published by the author. Appendix 1 (pp. 332–334) contains a taxonomic list of all taxa included in this volume. Appendix 2 lists all *Errata and corrigenda* recorded for volume 1, the previous book by the same author. A taxonomic index (pp. 336–339) and a set of 97 colour plates, with 400 eco-photos of cicadas taken in their natural settings, conclude this impressive book.

Overall, this volume has made a very good impression on me, particularly with regard to its comprehensiveness, and I wish to congratulate the author and publisher for such fine work. Despite the book containing taxonomic, ecological and ethological information on cicadas of Thailand only, there is no doubt that it will be useful for anyone studying cicadas of the entire SE Asia. It is indeed a useful reference volume to have both in a private library and in the library of any natural history museum or university.

Dmitri V. Logunov
Curator of Arthropods, The Manchester Museum