



Harvestmen: The Biology of Opiliones

From Harvard University Press

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This is the first comprehensive treatment of a major order of arachnids featuring more than 6,000 species worldwide, familiar in North America as daddy-longlegs but known scientifically as the Opiliones, or harvestmen. The 25 authors provide a much-needed synthesis of what is currently known about these relatives of spiders, focusing on basic conceptual issues in systematics and evolutionary ecology, making comparisons with other well-studied arachnid groups, such as spiders and scorpions. Broad in scope, the volume is aimed at raising relevant questions from a diversity of fields, indicating areas in which additional research is needed. The authors focus on both the unique attributes of harvestmen biology, as well as on biological studies conducted with harvestmen species that contribute to the understanding of behavior and evolutionary biology in general. By providing a broad taxonomic and ecological background for understanding this major arachnid group, the book should give field biologists worldwide the means to identify specimens and provide an invaluable reference for understanding harvestmen diversity and biology.

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Editorial Review

Review

This will be a mandatory classic for arachnologists, zoologists, and general biologists. (Jonathan A. Coddington, Smithsonian Institution)

Considering that...no single volume addressing [Opilione] biology has ever been written, this book is long overdue and will fill a notorious gap in the arachnological literature. There is no question that it will become a landmark reference, much like Weygoldt on pseudoscorpions, Polis on scorpions, and Punzo on solifuges, ultimately stimulating a resurgence in research on this diverse group of organisms. (Lorenzo Prendini, Assistant Curator: Arachnids & Myriapods, American Museum of Natural History)

Harvestmen covers virtually every aspect of harvestman biology...Inevitably, the longest chapter is on taxonomy, dealing with the disturbing features of the families and subfamilies in the four major *Opiliones* suborders. This is the first major revision of the order in over fifty years, and it is a tour de force...This is a book that will be prized by many naturalists, both amateur and professional. For anyone with even a passing interest in harvestmen, it will be required reading for decades to come. (Matthew Cobb *Times Literary Supplement* 2007-11-16)

A summary volume exceeding those of other arachnid orders in breadth and completeness...The landmark chapter on taxonomy will be particularly welcome to workers considering studying these animals. For the first time, the family level diversity of this group is very clearly summarized, with keys, diagnostic characters, etymology, phylogenetic relationships, and plentiful scanning electron micrographs and illustrations, on a worldwide basis...The text presents enough unanswered questions to provide an army of graduate students with research topics. By illuminating what makes *Opiliones* a distinctive taxon, the book sheds much light on the evolution and biology of arachnids as a whole, and anyone with an interest in Arachnida should acquire this work. (Michael L. Draney *Quarterly Review of Biology* 2007-12-01)

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