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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

Title: Book Review: Provisional Atlas of the Click Beetles (Coleoptera: Elateroidea) of the British Isles by Howard Mendel

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which is sufficiently flexible to meet the challenges and demands of modern natural history. This book reflects a society spending its resources in pursuit of its objectives - the publication of scientific information.

Introductory chapters include a history of recording, current situation, geology, habitats, conservation, attracting butterflies to the garden, useful addresses and a well-balanced argument on collecting.

There are, no doubt, one or two hair-splitting criticisms that connoisseurs of London's butterflies may find, but most of the errors I spotted have already been sorted out by an erratum slip.

The odd page size (220mm x 180mm) results from printing the maps equal in size to earlier works on London's fauna and flora so as to allow for the eventual production of compatible overlays.

The apparent high price reflects modern production costs; however, the book sells at only a few pence above cost price, and is really a bargain! I recommend this book to everyone interested in butterflies, and it should be essential reading for all London and Home Counties naturalists. Even though I live 150 miles away I still find myself dipping into this book from time to time.

Derek Whiteley

**PROVISIONAL ATLAS OF THE CLICK BEETLES
(COLEOPTERA : ELATEROIDEA) OF THE
BRITISH ISLES**
by Howard Mendel

Published by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, 1988. Price £5.50
ISBN 1-870393-11-2

This atlas summarises records gleaned by the national click beetle recording scheme, which is organised by Howard Mendel with the aid of the Biological Records Centre at Monks Wood. Of the 76 species of click beetles currently on the British list as many as 19 are listed in the Red Data Book of British Insects. Many of these are relict species associated with ancient woodland habitats and so an atlas summarising their British status and distribution provides invaluable sustenance to the current debate on insect indicator species of ancient woodland.

To each species the atlas devotes a page consisting of a 10km dot map and a numerical table showing vice county distribution. A map and key to vice

counties is provided at the beginning in order to interpret these tables. Symbols representing three data classes are used in the dot maps in a way which is informative, but not confusing, although of course it must be kept in the mind that the modern increase in recording obscures the visual portrayal in the maps of the real decline of many of the species. Two date classes are used in the vice county tables. Three extremely rare species and several extinct species are given separate treatment in an introduction which describes their recorded history in the British Isles.

It is heartening to see a number of museums mentioned in the acknowledgements. Surely this type of project must be a major justification for providing the resources which our insect collections require for their upkeep. It is to be hoped that the publication of this provisional atlas will stimulate museums and individuals to contribute further records to the recording scheme for eventual publication in the final atlas.

Derek Lott

**PROVISIONAL ATLAS OF THE TICKS
(IXODOIDEA) OF THE BRITISH ISLES**
by K P Martyn

Published by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, 1988. Price £4.00
ISBN 1-870393-09-0

This atlas deals with the 23 British species of ticks, which are a group of ectoparasitic mites familiar to many people who take their dogs for walks in the country or even those who wander bare legged through sheep pasture with tall grass.

A brief introduction summarises information on taxonomy, ecology and the medical importance of these animals in a concise, but informative way. A checklist of species is included in order to update the superceded nomenclature in the standard identification work. A map showing the spread of records used in the atlas reveals a surprisingly comprehensive if thinly scattered geographical coverage. The London area shows a relatively dense concentration of records. Sources of the records included in the atlas are listed and there seems to be ample scope for improving on the density of records over much of the country by reference to provincial museum collections.

Each species within the atlas is allocated a double page spread comprising a 10km square dot map and some text. Unfortunately no information on dates of records is