

BOOK REVIEW

EDMUND GITTENBERGER

Naturalis Biodiversity Center, P.O. Box 9517, NL-2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands; edi.gittenberger@naturalis.nl

BRUYNE, R.H. DE, LEEUWEN, S.J. VAN, GMELIG MEYLING, A.W. & DAAN, R., eds, 2013. Schelpdieren van het Nederlandse Noordzeegebied. Ecologische atlas van de mariene weekdieren (Mollusca): 414 pp., 23 × 30 cm, very many illustrations, colour figures of shells, distribution maps, etc. Uitg. Tirion, Utrecht & Stichting ANEMOON, Lisse. In Dutch. Price: 50 €.

38

The initial 38 pages of this monumental book contain, after an introduction, chapters on methods, on the North Sea as a habitat for molluscs, and on historical geological aspects. In the following pp. 39-340 the species of the six classes of molluscs that are represented in the Dutch part of the North Sea and dealt with, viz. Caudofoveata (1 species), Polyplacophora (3), Bivalvia (107), Gastropoda (134), Scaphopoda (1), and Cephalopoda (8). For all species there is a description of its morphology, the habitat and the distribution, often extended with additional notes on a variety of aspects. The book concludes with chapters on human influences and use of molluscs (pp. 343-354), conservational issues (pp. 355-360), an explanation of the terminology (pp. 361-364), detailed maps with records for the Wadden Sea (pp. 365-368) and SW Netherlands (pp. 369-374), a list of alien species that were found washed ashore (pp. 375-376), a summary of all the species and their distribution in parts of the area (pp. 377-381), an impressive list with the names of all hundreds of data contributors (p. 382), the photographers (p. 383), institutions providing data (p. 384), references (pp.385-406), and an index to the species (pp. 407-414).

This book contains a wealth of data on a broad range of aspects regarding the molluscs actually occurring in the Dutch part of the North Sea. The many illustrations make it an important source of information also for those who have linguistic problems with the Dutch text. It is one of those books that are too heavy to carry in the field. It deserves a prominent place on the bookshelf at home, however, to turn over the pages, to consult again and again.

It is not a book with all the final answers, but it is indispensable as a starting point. The specialist who wants to know more detailed information has to consult the systems that were used by the contributors of the data, or the contributors themselves, to get that background information. This is a drawback indeed, but a very understandable one and normal for a monograph of this kind, which would be unmanageable with references to every single item.

The editors and the many contributors to this impressive book can be proud. A solid base for further research is available now.