

Introduction

It is some years now since the first volume on aquatic adepagous Coleoptera in this series was published (Holmen 1987a). It dealt with the four smaller families Gyridae, Haliplidae, Hygrobiidae and Noteridae. This second volume is devoted to the large family Dytiscidae, which is represented by 157 species in Denmark, Fennoscandia and the Baltic states.

In order to facilitate identification, most of the keys have been written specifically for the taxa found in this region. For example, the keys to genera include only those genera known to occur in

the region under study, and the key characters may not apply to species from other regions. On the other hand, the diagnoses given for genera and higher taxa are based on the world fauna. Species identification is always difficult in the Dytiscidae, and we recommend that the reader should always read carefully both the alternatives given at each stage in the dichotomous keys.

No keys have been provided for the immature stages. It is hoped that dytiscid larvae will be dealt with in a future volume in this series.

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