

M.L. Sood: Reptilian Nematodes from South Asia. *International Book Distributors, Dehra Dun (India) 1999. 299 pp., 165 figs. Price US\$ 39.75.*

The Indian Subcontinent, as the main part of the zoogeographical Oriental Region, is a remarkable area with a rich and diverse fauna. This also applies to both reptiles and their parasites. Parasitic nematodes, as one of the most significant groups of reptilian parasites in tropical and subtropical countries, are not only a theoretical interest, but may be also of practical importance as pathogens in crocodile farms and other reptile breedings. Moreover, reptiles frequently serve as intermediate or paratenic hosts for a variety of nematodes that are parasitic as adults in other vertebrates, including those of economic importance. Regardless of the large number of mostly taxonomic papers dealing with nematodes in India and neighbouring countries, the knowledge of the nematode fauna of this region is still sparse. More than 60 years have elapsed since the first comprehensive treatise on nematodes from India was published by H.A. Baylis (1936, 1939) in the series *Fauna of British India*. Since then, an enormous amount of literature has accumulated. The much needed compilation of this extensive literature was initiated by Prof. M.L. Sood of the Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana, a well-known Indian helminthologist, in 1989 when his book "Fish Nematodes of South Asia" appeared (reviewed in *Folia Parasitol.* 38: 215, 1991), which was followed by "Amphibian Nematodes of South Asia" in 1990.

This third volume summarises all available information on the nematode fauna of reptiles in South Asia (i.e., Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). The species survey, taking up the majority of the book (210 pages), deals with 203 nematode species belonging to 51 genera. Like the earlier two volumes, the description, hosts, localisation,

distribution and relevant notes are given for each species. The majority of species are also illustrated, with drawings taken from the original papers. Keys to species are also provided.

The author reports all nematode species described to-date from reptiles of this geographical region, including those which have already been synonymised with others (this is mentioned in the accompanying remarks) or for which the systematic position is not clear. This survey documents the unsatisfactory taxonomic situation of the reptilian nematodes from this region without a critical evaluation of the existing data. A number of additional new species are continuously (mostly inadequately or erroneously) described, further complicating the situation. The only solution will be a detailed revision of the individual groups of nematodes. In this situation, the use of the keys to species identification is rather problematic.

Nevertheless, in providing relevant data concerning all the hitherto described species of reptilian nematodes (which are otherwise scattered in many, often barely accessible journals), the survey may be an indispensable source of information for subsequent students in this field. Valuable parts of the book include the Host-Parasite List (30 pages) and a list of references (22 pages). Indexes of authors, parasites and hosts are also provided.

Undoubtedly, similar to foregoing volumes, this monograph represents one of the basic works on parasites of reptiles in South Asia and may well become a basis for subsequent revisions of taxonomy as well as studies on the biology, ecology and zoogeography of reptilian nematodes in this territory.

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