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Book Review: *Insecta Coleoptra Chironidae* (Huchet, J.-B. 2003)

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BOOK REVIEW

HUCHET, J.-B. 2003. **Insecta Coleoptera Chironidae**. *Faune de Madagascar 90*, 88 pp. ISSN 0428-0709. Price: 37 Euros (about 40 US). Available at the Fauna of Madagascar website: <http://www.mnhn.fr/publication/faunemad/index.html>.

The Fauna of Madagascar series has been around for almost 50 years. In that time authors have published on a variety of taxa that occur on this remarkable island. Throughout the history of the series there has been a heavy emphasis on beetles. The latest volume by Jean-Bernard Huchet is no exception. Huchet is an expert on Chironidae (or Chironinae depending on which scarab classification scheme you ascribe to). He is in the process of giving a much-needed taxonomic overhaul to the group. Chironidae are odd-looking scarabs that occur in Africa, Asia (mainly India), and Madagascar and are allied taxonomically with Aphodiinae.

Huchet presents an excellent survey of the four species of Chironidae of Madagascar. The text is in French with English translations for the abstract, key to species, and the descriptions of the two new species. The volume begins with an introduction containing an overview of the taxonomic history of the group and a discussion of the biogeography and origin of Chironidae. This is followed by a detailed taxonomic treatment for all taxa (species, subgenera, and genera) occurring in Madagascar. Also provided in this section are the key to all the species, distributional data, habitat information, a larval description for one of the genera, and information on the phoretic mites found on Chironidae in the study region. Finally, there are color habitat images and maps for Madagascar and excellent illustrations and SEMs (65 figures in total) of many adult and larval character states necessary for identification and taxonomic placement.

Overall this is an excellent work. The only drawback is the somewhat steep price relative to the size and scope of the volume. Anyone interested in African and Madagascan scarabs and those generally interested in the fauna and biogeography of Madagascar should consider buying a copy. Longtime fans of the Fauna of Madagascar series will notice the facelift it has experienced in recent years. Gone are the simple paper covers and plain colors. The new layout looks attractive with a slick cover design and crisp color images within. The text is now more appealing to look at and much easier to read. The paper used is thick and a marked improvement over the older volumes.

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