



## Orthopteroid Internet Resources

*Ed Baker*

*edwbaker@googlemail.com*

Over the last few years there have been a number of new, high-quality, internet resources for those interested in orthopteroid insects. So far, comprehensive taxonomic databases have been created for the orders Orthoptera, Phasmida, Mantodea and Blattodea. These use the Species File Software (<http://software.speciesfile.org>) and contain complete lists of taxa, valid and invalid names, type data and references. Although primarily of use to those interested in the taxonomy of the relevant order it has a number of more general uses, including generating a list of species known to occur in a particular geographic region, and finding the current binomial combination of species (many species of phasmid, for example, are seen for sale using outdated names).

Three orthopteroid groups have enthusiasts' groups; Blattodea (Blattodea Culture Group), Phasmida (Phasmid Study Group) and Mantodea (Mantis Study Group). Although the Mantis Study Group is not active there is work underway to re-create the group online. All three groups have websites making use of the European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy's Scratchpad system (<http://www.scratchpads.eu>). This system allows for the creation of professional quality websites that can store and make easily accessible a vast quantity of data.

There is a large number of sites relating to these orders, in particular Blattodea and Phasmida, and the following list is not intended to be comprehensive. As always with internet sites there are a great deal out there which fall short of what one would expect, be it due to poor design, being factually incorrect, or not having been updated for a number of years. All of the sites I have listed below are being actively maintained by communities that have a good knowledge of 'their' order.

### ***Blattodea***

**Blattodea Species File** (<http://blattodea.speciesfile.org>). Taxonomic database of the world's extant species of cockroach, minus the recently included termites (epifamily Termitoidae).

**Blattodea Culture Group** (<http://www.blattodea-culture-group.org>). The Blattodea Culture Group is a society dedicated to the culture of cockroaches in captivity. The website contains back issues of



newsletters which are free to download, an image gallery, answers to frequently asked questions, and more. Members receive access to a number of extra features.

**The Cockroach Forum** (<http://www.blattodea.net>). Originally an independent forum, now run by the Blattodea Culture Group, this is the best place to discuss (at least in English) anything to do with cockroaches. Topics covered include identification, rearing in captivity, field trips, livestock exchange and more.

### ***Phasmida***

**Phasmida Species File** (<http://phasmida.speciesfile.org>). Taxonomic database of the world's phasmids. A large amount of work is currently underway to include type photographs from the Natural History Museum, London. The references include papers relating to the rearing of species in captivity.

**Phasmid Study Group** (<http://www.phasmid-study-group.org>). This is the most developed of all of the Scratchpad based sites, due mainly to contributions from members and the popularity of these insects as pets. There is a section on the UK naturalised phasmids, including a form with which to submit records electronically. Other content includes the journal *Phasmid Studies*, now available for free online. There is information on the majority of species that have ever been kept in culture, and the amount of content is continually growing; recent additions include a phasmid glossary. Members of the group have access to back issues of the newsletter, and a number of other phasmid-related journals.

The site has a brand new forum (discussion board) where you may ask questions on rearing or identification, and exchange livestock.

**Phasmatodea.de** (<http://www.phasmatodea.de>). Interesting site with lots of useful information, in both English and German.

### ***Orthoptera***

**Orthoptera Species File** (<http://orthoptera.speciesfile.org>). Taxonomic database of the world's orthoptera. This is the most developed of the three Species File sites.

### ***Mantodea***

**Mantodea Species File** (<http://mantodea.speciesfile.org>). Taxonomic database of the world's mantids. This site has only recently come online, and is still in the early stages of development.



**Mantis Study Group** (<http://mantodea.speciesfile.org>) has a growing amount of high-quality information on mantids. This is the youngest of the three Scratchpad sites but has a growing volume of content. The image galleries are arranged both taxonomically and geographically. There is a forum (discussion board) and a number of scientific papers are available for download.

***Mantophasmatodea***

**Mantophasmatodea.de** (<http://www.mantophasmatodea.de/gladiator/>) gives the systematic arrangement of the order with photographs, distribution, etc.

**Dermaptera**

**Dermaptera Species File** (<http://dermaptera.speciesfile.org>). Still in the very early stages of development. The overall content will be similar to that of the other Species Files.

**Neil Robinson – in memoriam**

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Neil Robinson on Tuesday 7th October 2008. Neil was an important figure in the accumulation of our knowledge of aculeates in the north-west, and during my time as a former editor of the *Bulletin*, in addition to having some thoroughly enjoyable conversations with a true gentleman, I had the privilege of processing two of his illustrated articles on: "The uninvited guest ant *Formicoxenus nitidulus* Nylander. in North West England" (461: 126-128) and "Nationally rare bees in North West England" (473: 160-162).

Neil, and his outstanding contributions will be greatly missed and I can only reiterate the words of Mike Edwards: "His departure leaves the north-west with a huge hole in aculeate mapping. I hope that this will soon be filled to his greater memory."

**Peter Sutton**