

Manual of Afrotropical Diptera. 2017. Volume 1 & 2, edited by Ashley H. Kirk-Spriggs and Bradley J. Sinclair.

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Two words – absolutely magnificent! The editors have really raised the bar and are to be congratulated on the first two (of four) superb volumes in the literature of dipterology.

These two volumes begin with a fitting and poignant tribute to the late Brian R. Stuckenberg, regarded by many as the ‘father’ of Afrotropical dipterology and who would, I’m sure, have been delighted at such superb clarity and completeness. The most notable step forward in these volumes is the abundant introduction of high quality photographic images of flies, previously not seen in Manuals of Dipterology of the Nearctic, Palaearctic and Central & Neotropical America regions. The sections most benefitting from these superb renderings, are the dichotomous keys, in which the characters in the couplets are clearly illustrated by clearly annotated photographic images. That is not to say that the detailed line drawings accompanying these and previous Manuals of Dipterology are poor (anything but, they are extremely detailed), but rather, that the photographs more clearly and more attractively provide visual information.

Paging through the two volumes, one is struck by the incredible diversity of Afrotropical Diptera and can only but marvel at the evolutionary processes that took place resulting in the fauna we see today. The degree of detail in the family chapters is consistent with the quality of previous manuals and the individual contributors are to be commended, as much the editors are, on the high standard of delivery.

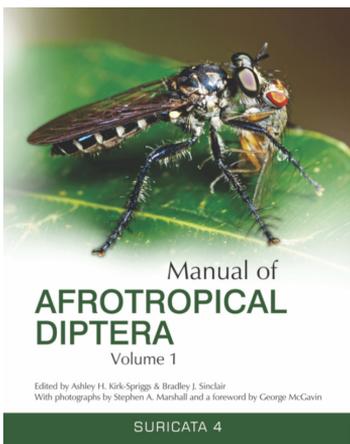
Volume one begins with a thoughtfully worded forward by George McGavin and acknowledgements from the senior editor Ashley Kirk-Spriggs, followed by introductory chapters covering a brief history of Afrotropical dipterology and collection and

preservation of Diptera. There then follows a detailed chapter on adult morphology consistent with the terminology previously used in *Manuals of Dipterology*, which has become a global standard and consistently used by most dipterists. The next seven chapters make wonderful reading, covering natural history of flies, agricultural, medical, veterinary and forensic significance, biogeography and conservation of diptera. Each chapter concludes with a thorough and abundant list of references, which collectively must surely represent the most up-to-date treatment of the literature of Diptera in the Afrotropical region. The chapter concludes with what is almost certainly the most important content of this volume – the abundantly illustrated keys to adults and to larvae of the 108 Afrotropical Diptera families, both of which have been rigorously tested by contributors and specialists from across the globe.

Volume two is the first of the family treatments, covering 43 families assigned to the nematoceros Diptera and lower Brachycera. As noted in the chapter *Phylogeny of Diptera* (volume 1), the traditional use of Nematocera and Brachycera as two sub-families is gradually being replaced by five major groups in accordance with modern phylogenetic outcomes. The avoidance of any confusion brought about by currently mobile classifications is accomplished with ease by simply treating the families one after another without overlaying the higher classification. This leads to ease of access and long term value.

It is of great benefit that the family chapters all follow the same format – diagnosis, biology and immature stages, economic significance, classification, identification, key to genera (separate as adults, larvae and pupae separate where appropriate), synopsis of the fauna and lastly the literature cited. This consistent format across all chapters provides coherence and ease of use. Likewise the style of writing is very consistent, as is of course, the terminology used (as per chapter 3 in volume 1).

The high quality production is to be admired and by comparison with other modern printed texts of this size, the volumes are very reasonably priced, due largely to the support of the sponsors listed in Volume 1. A recommended addition to any natural history book shelf, these informative two volumes and the eagerly awaited volumes 3 and 4, are a must for specialists and generalist alike.

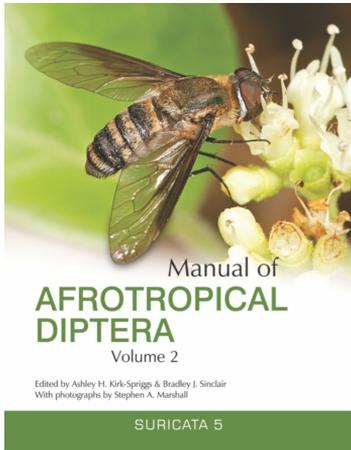


- *Manual of Afrotropical Diptera. Volume 1.* Introductory chapters and keys to Diptera families. *Suricata* 4, i-xiii + 1–425 pp. ISBN: 978-1-928224-11-2.

Volume 1 is published in full colour and comprises 425 printed pages. The volume includes 11 general **introductory chapters** dealing with the history of Afrotropical dipterology, collection and preservation, morphology and terminology, natural history, agricultural and veterinary, medical, forensic and phytosanitary significance, biogeography, conservation and the phylogeny of flies. The volume also

includes **identification keys** to all Afrotropical fly families for both adult and larval stages. The text is richly illustrated with over **1,600 illustrations**, including **40 colour maps, 800 colour** and **60 black and white images** and **690 line drawings** of flies.

Price (excluding postage and packaging); Volume 1: ZAR350 (=±USD24).



- Manual of Afrotropical Diptera. Volume 2. Nematocerou Diptera and lower Brachycera. *Suricata* 5, i-xii + 427–1361 pp. ISBN: 978-1-928224-12-9.

Volume 2 is published in full colour and comprises 936 printed pages. The volume includes **family chapters** dealing with **43** of the 108 families of flies that occur in the region and covers the nematocerous Diptera and lower Brachycera (sometimes termed the lower Diptera). Each chapter includes a diagnosis of the family, sections dealing with biology and immature stages, classification and identification, an identification key to genera (if more than one) and a synopsis of the fauna section, arranged genus by genus alphabetically. The text is richly illustrated with over **2,900 illustrations**, including **1,360 colour** and **130 black and white images** and **1,430 line drawings** of flies.

Price (excluding postage and packaging); Volume 2: ZAR520 (=±USD35).

Both published in 2017 by SANBI Graphics & Editing, Pretoria, South Africa, edited by Ashley H. Kirk-Spriggs and Bradley J. Sinclair.

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