



# Flies: The Natural History and Diversity of Diptera

By Stephen Marshall

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**Flies: The Natural History and Diversity of Diptera** By Stephen Marshall

Advance praise for *Flies*:

***Stephen A. Marshall has delivered one of the most beautiful and useful accounts of insect life ever written.***

-- **Edward O. Wilson, Research Professor Emeritus, Harvard University**

Meticulously researched and illustrated with more than 2000 color photographs taken by the author, *Flies* is a landmark reference book that will be indispensable to any naturalist, biologist or entomologist. Most photographs in this encyclopedic reference were taken in the field and show the insects in their natural environment. All of the world's fly families are included, with photographic coverage spanning the range from common deer flies and fruit flies through to deadly tsetse flies and malaria mosquitoes, with thousands of spectacular species such as exotic stalk eyed flies, giant robber flies and hedgehog flies in between.

*Flies* is broken up into three parts: Life Histories, Habits and Habitats of Flies; Diversity; and Identifying and Studying Flies. The 20 pages of profusely illustrated keys linked to the unprecedented photographic coverage of the world's fly families and subfamilies enable the reader to identify most flies quickly and accurately, and to readily access information about each family as well as hundreds of distinctive genera and species.

*Flies* includes:

Part 1: Life Histories, Habits and Habitats of Flies

Chapter 1 -- Life Histories of Flies

Chapter 2 -- Flies, Plants and Fungi

Chapter 3 -- Flies and Vertebrates

Chapter 4 -- Flies and Invertebrates

Part 2: Diversity

Chapter 5 -- Origins and Distribution of the Diptera

Chapter 6 -- The Lower Diptera

Chapter 7 -- The Lower Brachycera and Empidoidea

Chapter 8 -- The Higher Brachycera or Cyclorrhapha

Part 3: Identifying and Studying Flies

Chapter 9 -- Collecting, Preserving and Rearing Flies

Chapter 10 -- Identifying Fly Families

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### Editorial Review

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\*Starred Review\* Harvard research professor emeritus Edward O. Wilson describes *Flies: The Natural History and Diversity of Diptera* as “one of the most beautiful and useful accounts of insect life ever written.” This accolade succinctly describes this book. Author Marshall, an entomologist and photographer, renders mature scholarship accessible and interesting to lay readers. The Diptera (flies) constitute an order that encompasses insects such as mosquitoes, midges, and fungus gnats as well as hundreds of thousands of species yet to be formally named. Three sections delineate this book’s organizational structure. Part 1 provides an overview of fly life histories and their interactions with plants and animals. Part 2 introduces the origins and distribution of the Diptera as well as a detailed global overview of fly families and subfamilies. Part 3 deals with collecting, preserving, and identifying flies; in addition, it incorporates a 19-page pictorial key to the world’s fly families designed to be more user-friendly than comprehensive regional keys. The topically arranged entries range in length from a concise paragraph to several pages. Sample entries include Biogeographic regions and Diptera distribution, Maggots, Mosquitoes and disease, Simuliidae, and Identifying flyfamilies. More than 2,000 color photographs, including many remarkable close-up views of flies, supplement the text. Photographic guides to families in subgroups of the Diptera give the reader a sense of the broad diversity of this order. A 12-page index provides subject access to the contents but could be improved with the addition of more see references from common names to scientific names. A lengthy listing of books and journal articles presents resources for additional information. Notable for broad scope, cogent organization, informed entries, clear writing, and revealing photographs, *Flies: The Natural History and Diversity of Diptera* merits a strong recommendation for acquisition by academic, special, and public libraries. --Nancy Cannon

#### Review

A must have for fly fans. (Ian Paulsen *Birdbooker Report 241, GrrlScientist, The Guardian* 2012-09-30)

If the title of this book turns you off, judge it instead by its appealing cover photograph of two whimsically patterned insects perched on a yellow flower. Author Marshall, a professor of entomology at the University of Guelph, Ontario, has produced the definitive work on creatures of the order Diptera, combining scholarly thoroughness and popular accessibility with his own eye-popping photos. Here you'll find descriptions of these diminutive creatures' life histories and behavior, a complete guide to classifying and identifying them, and even a section on trapping and preserving specimens for display. Still, most readers, conditioned to swat at the merest dipteran buzz, may prefer to make this handsome book the extent of their personal fly collection. (Laurence A. Marschall *Natural History* 2012-11-01)

Marshall...renders mature scholarship accessible and interesting to lay readers... Part 1 provides an overview of fly life histories and their interactions with plants and animals. Part 2 introduces the origins and distribution of the Diptera as well as a detailed global overview of fly families and subfamilies. Part 3 deals with collecting, preserving, and identifying flies... Over 2000 color photographs, including many remarkable close-up views of flies, supplement the text.... Notable for broad scope, cogent organization, informed entries, clear writing, and revealing photographs, [the book] merits a strong recommendation for acquisition by academic, special, and public libraries. (Nancy Cannon *Booklist* 2013-03-01)

University of Guelph entomologist Marshall has been an insect enthusiast since he was five. He notes that diptera (flies) have been around for more than 300 million years and that they have an enormous impact on

the planet, killing millions of people by transmitting disease but also pollinating plants and disposing of dung and carrion that would quickly otherwise overwhelm us. Part 1 of the book describes the life of the creatures, Part 2 examines their diversity, and Part 3 gives advice on how to study, collect, and identify flies. With 2,200 stunning color photos, this book offers a whole new perspective on a world of more than 160,000 species. (Brian E. Coutts and Cheryl LaGuardia *Library Journal, Best Reference of 2012* 2013-03-28)

Robin McLeod reviewed (very positively) Stephen Marshall's *Insects: Their Natural History and Diversity* in the February 2008 *Cardinal* (No. 210). Dr. Marshall is a professor at the University of Guelph and has advanced the technique of insect identification using photography of living specimens. In his just-released book on flies, he follows on with his winning format, presenting more than 2000 photos of flies from around the world. Part 1 of the book discusses the life histories, habits, and habitats of flies. Part 2 covers the diversity of Diptera. Part 3 is devoted to collection and identification. (Hugh Casbourn *The Cardinal* No. 229, *The McIlwraith Field Natural* 2012-11-01)

Stupendous ... unless you are a thorough dipterophobe, I urge you to order a copy NOW! Both the pictures and the text will enlighten and amaze you. As E. O Wilson rightly says: Stephen A. Marshall has delivered one of the most beautiful and useful accounts of insect life ever written. ([whyevolutionistrue.wordpress.com](http://whyevolutionistrue.wordpress.com) 2013-01-16)

Flies is written and imaged for both the academic and the enthusiastic layperson. It contains some 2000 color images of flies in their natural environment, nearly all taken by the author. He has selected...those that he finds especially fascinating and those essential for demonstrating global dipteran diversity in form and function... Marshall's text tells compelling stories about all these kinds of flies that are easily read by citizen naturalists and high-schoolers in science class, as well as professional biologists of all walks of study... Without a doubt, Marshall sets high standards. (Terry L. Erwin, Hyper-diversity Group, Department *ZooKeys* 261:85-86 (2013) 2013-01-24)

This voluminous book is the first worldwide treatment of the order Diptera to be published. The author...is not only a well-known and very experienced dipterist but also an excellent photographer of insects, who is moreover endowed with an indisputably great literary talent and enormous creativity. All these attributes and abilities combined with great experience in science and teaching were utilized in the preparation of this extraordinary publication.... The Pictorial keys to the families of Diptera worldwide, which include a review of the morphological characters used, forms a particularly valuable part of the last chapter called Identifying Flies... The major merit of this work is its intelligibility and readability, which make it accessible not only to dipterists but to a wide public interested in natural history. The unusual number (over 2,000) of spectacular colour macro-photographs of flies, which form an integral part of this book, greatly increases its attractiveness. Even

the most demanding Diptera specialist is likely to be enthusiastic about Marshall's *Flies*. This is because not only does it include up-to-date information on all currently recognised families of Diptera but also photographs of at least one representative of each family, including some extremely rare or even mysterious ones, 99 percent of which are of living specimens! If nothing else, the considerable effort over many years that was required of the author to achieve this should be greatly appreciated. Who of the contemporary researchers in Diptera could say that he/she had studied or even seen a species of all the families of flies in the world? Surely, almost nobody, but Steve Marshall has enabled us to fill these gaps in our personal knowledge of this order of insects. Finally, also the esthetical aspects of flies should be stressed. The splendid photographs show us the beauty of the colours, forms and diversity of the often very peculiar structures of flies, all of which further contribute to the attractiveness of this book. It is admirable that the author was able to summarize the vast amount of published data on taxonomy, phylogeny, biology, distribution etc. in this valuable worldwide

survey of the order Diptera. We the reviewers have already been working with flies many years, but nevertheless could not have produced such an enormous synthetic study as this.... This excellent book can be recommended to all readers interested in flies be they professional dipterists, teachers or simply nature or photography enthusiasts. There is no other similar comprehensive, well-illustrated and up-to-date book on this extremely diverse and important group of insects. (J. Rohacek and J. Sevcik, Silesian Museum, Opava *European Journal of Entomology Vol 110 No. 3*)

Meticulously researched and illustrated.... Flies is a landmark reference book that will be indispensable to any naturalist, biologist or entomologist. (Ian Paulsen *GrrlScientist, The Guardian* 2012-10-01)

This is the first time that fly biology and natural history has so thoroughly been covered in one place for novices, students, and experts, and thereby adds a major access point to knowledge on Diptera. ... The author, Stephen Marshall, is a world authority on flies and a recognized teacher of entomology. He successfully mixes fascinating biology, strong scientific context, and visual wonder in this book... both novices and students can develop a sense of the breadth of fly diversity in an organized and scientifically accurate framework... A large fraction of the work is a photographic compendium and guide to flies and so it functions as a reference, an identification tool, a study guide, and a celebration of fly diversity. The final two chapters will be particularly valuable to students of insect diversity who need to know more about collecting and identifying flies. This includes a chapter on collecting and photographing flies that brings the author's passions to light through his

enjoyable journey and real passion for documenting fly diversity. In all, this is a beautiful and valuable scholarly resource for fly biologists, students, and naturalists illuminating these little appreciated, but ubiquitous, animals in all their complexity and wonder. (Brian M. Wiegmann, Entomology, North Carolina Stat *Quarterly Review of Biology Vol 88 No 4* 2013-12-01)

#### About the Author

**Stephen A. Marshall** is a professor of entomology at the University of Guelph, where he developed a major insect collection and carries out research on insect systematics and biodiversity. He has discovered hundreds of new species, several new genera and even two new subfamilies. He is the author of *Insects: Their Natural History and Diversity*.

## Users Review

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