

Les moustiques de l'Afrique méditerranéenne. Scientific content by Jacques Brunhes, Adel Rhaim, Bernard Geoffroy, Guy Angel, Jean-Paul Hervy and others.

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This CD-ROM requires a minimum specification of a Pentium PC with 32 Mb RAM using Windows 95, 98 or NT. It is designed for the identification of the 73 species of mosquito currently recorded from the North African coast (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt) and also serves as a training program in mosquito identification and a database for the mosquitoes of the area. It was developed by the Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD), formerly ORSTOM. As two-thirds of the mosquitoes included in this key are also found in Europe, this CD-ROM will be of interest to almost all readers of this journal.

Clear and concise instructions guide the user through the program culminating in identifications in which the user has confidence due to the facility of cross-checking. To assist the user, a help facility is available to explain the screen symbols and provide subsidiary information. However, the navigation on the program is very rigid and it is not possible to move between different areas of the program.

The main screen allows the user to identify larvae or adults to the level of either genus or species and to access information about larval or adult instars within these taxa. The information section on genera has headings of features (morphological characters); bioecology; distribution map; larval illustration and adult illustration. The information section on species covers classification of the Culicidae, nomenclature and synonymy, life cycles of anophelines and culicines, larval and adult morphology, identity cards of all the species, distribution and country lists, biogeographical origins, bioecological peculiarities, medical and veterinary interest and a bibliography.

Identification is achieved by selecting from a series of characters. An advantage of this key over conventional dichotomous keys is that a number of features can be considered. Also if one character is not apparent or is unclear then it is still possible to proceed with the identification. Confirmation of the identification is provided by an "identification card", and access to further corroborative evidence is available in the form of details of distribution, bioecology and morphology of the selected species. The morphology option is accompanied by illustrations of all of the characters with identification features highlighted. In total there are over five hundred original illustrations that help guide the user through the identification options. Unfortunately it is not possible to print any of these identification cards or illustrations and, in general, the CD allows little opportunity for interaction. There is an extensive glossary containing terms relating to taxonomy, morphology, ecology and parasites transmitted by mosquitoes, which can be referred to at almost any stage of the program.

The program is not only a very valuable tool for identification for entomologists and ecologists, but also a good instruction aid for those who teach on courses in biodiversity and vector biology. This is an excellent key and will be appreciated and valued by its users.

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