At last, a scientific book on part of Guatemala's biodiversity. This new book brings to mind Janzen (1983), Costa Rican Natural History, for its large page size and treatment of the natural history of a Central American country, but is printed on heavier paper, has some colored illustrations, and has 52 as contrasted with 174 contributing authors. Its 36 chapters are written in English (12) or Spanish (24), and each has an English Abstract and a Spanish Resumen. Each is of several pages, and the book lacks the short articles ('species accounts') that are a feature of Janzen's (1983) book.

A short introduction explains that the project to produce this work began in 1995, and was funded in 2004 by Fondo Nacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza, allowing publication of this volume in 2006. It deals with 5983 species. The first section of three chapters is on geology and paleogeography, with emphasis on paleobotany but with some information on vertebrate paleogeography. For the entomologist trying to understand the geology of the region, be warned that here is another geological interpretation which does not necessarily match exactly to interpretations you may have read previously.

Next come 14 chapters on plants. They begin with an overview and follow with chapters on Briophyta (mosses, 3 chapters), Araceae (aroids), Smilax (Smilaceae), Agavaceae, Orchidaceae (orchids), Bromeliaceae (bromeliads), mistletoes (Loranthaceae, Viscaceae, and Eremolepidaceae), Phaseolus (Leguminosae), Cactaceae (cactus), Asclepiadaceae, and Solanaceae. Some of those taxa will have great interest for entomologists as the basis of plant-insect food chains. I particularly appreciated the chapter on bromeliads with its species list and discussion on diversity and distribution.

Then come 19 chapters on animals. The first is on marine molluscs, and the last four on vertebrates (freshwater fishes, amphibians and reptiles, birds, and mammals). There are 14 chapters on arthropods. They begin with chapter 19 on Thelyphonida (= Uropygida, vinegaroons) and 20 on Amblypygi (= Amblypygiida, whip scorpions), both by C. Viquez N. (of INBio, Costa Rica) and L. F. de Armas (of Havana, Cuba).

Chapter 21 on Odonata is by B. González C. of Universidad de San Carlos, Guatemala and deals genus by genus with the 213 species known from Guatemala. Chapter 22 on Fulgoridae is by G. Goemans of Institut Royal Belguque des Sciences Naturelles, and lists the 29 species known from Guatemala and discusses behavior of some of them. Chapter 23 on Cicindelidae (=Cicindelinae, tiger beetles, a subfamily of Carabidae) is by R. Huber and three other U.S. authors, provides a checklist of the 26 species recorded from Guatemala, a key to identification for adults, species accounts, and distributional records. Chapter 24 on Cerambycidae by California's F.T. Hovore manages to list the 769 species now recorded from Guatemala, adds discussion about taxonomic history and diversity, and speculates that the total cerambycid fauna may amount to 1000 species. Chapter 25 on Passalidae is by J.C. Schuster of Universidad del Valle who reports 84 species known for Guatemala and gives a detailed discussion of biogeography of this family for three regions: Mexico north of the isthmus of Tehuantepec, Central America south to the Nicaraguan depression, and the Nicaraguan depression south to the edge of South America. Chapter 26 is by J. Monzón S. of Universidad del Valle who deals with the 26 species of Chrysina (Scarabaeidae: Rutelinae) known from Guatemala, which include five undescribed species. Chapter 27 on Ctenuchinae (Lepidoptera: Arctiidae) is by F. Hernández-Baz (of Universidad Veracruzana, Mexico) and A.C. Bailey (of Universidad del Valle, Guatemala), who list the 215 species of this subfamily known from Guatemala and compare this diversity with that of other Neotropical regions. Chapter 28 is by the aforementioned A.C. Bailey, F. Hernández-Baz, and J. Monzón S., and is on Pericopinae (Lepidoptera: Arctiidae), with a species list (38 species) for Guatemala in which 11 are newly added. Chapter 29 is by J. Monzón S. and J. Haxaire (Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris) on Sphingidae, of which 119 species are recorded for Guatemala. Chapter 30 is by M.V. Barrios and C. Méndez (both of Universidad de San Carlos, Guatemala) and G.T. Austin (University of Florida) on Hesperiidae, including a checklist of 396 Guatemalan species. Chapter 31 is by C.W. Dick (Texas Tech University) on Streblidae, with 40 Guatemalan species. The final chapter on insects is by R.P. Eckerlin (Northern Virginia Community College) on the 23 species of Siphonaptera known from Guatemala, all with host records.

Although the chapter on birds is backed up by a large, well-illustrated volume, many of the chapters on insects break new ground. Enio Cano is to be congratulated on assembling this volume. I hope he can keep the momentum and produce many more volumes until all the insect groups of Guatemala are equally well treated. Can we even begin, yet, to estimate the number of species occurring in that country? The botanical chapters did not venture a guess on the total number of species occurring in that country? The botanical chapters did not venture a guess on the total number of species occurring in that country? The botanical chapters did not venture a guess on the total number of species occurring in that country?
species of plants, although the plants are undoubtedly more completely known than are the insects.

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