A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF GENERAL CATALOGUES
AND CHECK LISTS OF NEARCTIC RHOPALOCERA

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Introduction

While engaged in preparing a check list and a catalogue of the North American Rhopalocera, north of Mexico, it has been necessary to consult most check lists and catalogues dealing with that subject. In the belief that it would prove useful to students to have the references to such publications gathered together in one paper, this bibliography has been compiled, the arrangement being chronological.

At the outset we are met with the apparently simple questions — 1) What is a check list? and 2) What is a catalogue? They will be considered in that order.

WEBSTER (1947, p. 458) defines a [scientific] check list as “A list, usually alphabetic and numbered, of species, genera, etc., for the convenience of collectors and students, usually limited to a given group, region, or collection.” Implied in that answer or definition is the further thought that the list, to be of scientific value, should be systematic in form. While modern check lists are invariably systematic in composition, the earliest ones were often alphabetical. Today alphabetical or chronological lists would be of little value to a systematist, and the former could be considered little more than in index to the names. Appended to a check list is often found an index, especially in modern times.

WEBSTER (1947, p. 420) defines a catalogue, insofar as material, as “A list or enumeration of names, titles, or articles arranged methodically, often in alphabetical order and usually with descriptive details, . . . .” A catalogue then is an expanded check list of the scientific names of insects intended to be used for their systematic study. It too should be arranged systematically rather than alphabetically or chronologically, and for the same reason. It is often followed by an alphabetical index. The enlargement of the check list into a catalogue is accomplished by the addition of references to 1) the original description of each insect, 2) its distribution, and 3) its synonymy. The first two pieces of information are usually present in a catalogue, but the synonymies may or may not be present without affecting the classification of the work as a catalogue.

It is sometimes difficult to draw a line between what is a catalogue and what is a revision. The title of the publication is not controlling always. Whenever doubt has arisen in the author’s mind, it has been thought best to include those publications concerning which there may be differences of opinion. In a sense, many of the scientific publications of the Eighteenth Century, such as those of LINNAEUS and FABRICIUS, were catalogues, designed as they were to list all known animals and plants, and in many cases giving references to their original descriptions and habitats. However, such works were much more than catalogues, because they described animals and plants, often as new to science. Hence, they are not deemed to have any place in a bibliography of catalogues.

It is possible that at one end of the scale (check lists) too much has been included by taking into the bibliography HÜBNER’s Index exot icorum Lepidop-
terorum (1821) and bis Systematisch-alphabetisches Verzeichniss (1822), while at the other end (catalogues) something has been omitted by leaving out Duponchel's Catalogue méthodique des Lépidoptères d'Europe (1844), Doubleday and Westwood's Genera of diurnal Lepidoptera (1846-1852), Wytsman's Genera Insectorum (1902-...), and similar works.

If we place check lists at one end of the scale in dealing with these three kinds of scientific publications, the intermediate position would undoubtedly be occupied by catalogues, and the other end by revisions. While the line dividing check lists from catalogues is easily drawn, the demarcation between catalogues and revisions is sometimes difficult to draw, the former sometimes being partly revisionary in character in spite of the title they may bear (i.e., Systematic catalogue of Speyeria). Check lists and catalogues should not be revisionary in nature, although a few revisionary notes may be included properly. That function should be reserved for revisionary works. Thus the Dos Passos & Grey (1947) work cited above could more properly have been entitled a revision of Speyeria, since that is its inherent nature and purpose, but is included in the bibliography because of the check list of Speyeria that it contains.

Many catalogues and check lists include both Rhopalocera and Heterocera. The latter, while not relevant to this paper, have been included sometimes in the collations, if contained in the same volume or part thereof as the Rhopalocera. One world-wide catalogue (of Strand) deals with families or subfamilies of the Rhopalocera that are not represented in North America. Such families or subfamilies are omitted insofar as possible, but when contained in a volume or part dealing with families or subfamilies that are represented in North America, they have been included. The theory followed in general is that it is better to include in this bibliography too much rather than too little.

While we are interested primarily in general check lists and catalogues of butterflies occurring in North America, north of Mexico, including Greenland, some of those insects have a circumpolar distribution. After all, Nearctic and Palaearctic regions are merely man-made terms. It is necessary, therefore, to cite also in the bibliography not only the strictly Nearctic works but also all general Palaearctic check lists and catalogues that refer to those circumpolar insects. While this lengthens the bibliography somewhat, it is hoped that it will add greatly to its value.

Included also are a few lists of large areas of North America, such as New England, the eastern and western regions of the United States, and those relating solely to the preparatory stages of the Lepidoptera. Perhaps some of the former may not be considered general catalogues. Similar liberty has been taken by the inclusion of somewhat localized lists or catalogues of the Scandinavian fauna, but on the other hand, lists and catalogues of European countries, such as Wheeler's Butterflies of Switzerland (1903), Zerkowitz's Lepidoptera of Portugal (1946), and Agenjo's Catalogo ordenador de los lepidopteros de España (1946-1947), have been excluded as not sufficiently general.

Hübner, Jacob, 1816-[1826]. Verzeichniss bekannter Schmettinge [sic]. Augsburg. 432 + 72 pp.
1956

The Lepidopterists' News 31


..., 1876. [Same title.] Ibid., vol. 3: pp. 98-129.


¹ This synopsis is often found bound in at the back of The butterflies of North America, series 1, with the same pagination. Apparently either reference would be correct.

² This check list was issued to subscribers in parts with volume 4, numbers 5-10 (1881-1882) of the Bulletin of the Brooklyn Entomological Society, but paginated separately. It was also issued and sold with a title page dated 1882.

³ This list of species was issued separately with 16 unnumbered pages, but is often found bound in at the back of The butterflies of North America, series 2, with pages numbered [343-358]. Apparently either reference would be correct.


Seok, D. M., 1939. *A synonymic list of the butterflies of Korea (Tyusen).*
Korea, Korean Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, pp.


**Conclusion**

All of the foregoing works have been examined personally, with the exception of three by HEYDENREICH, none of which is available in the Library of the American Museum of Natural History. The collation of those publications has been taken in part from the Catalogue of the books, manuscripts, maps and drawings in the British Museum (Natural History) (1903-1940), and the Index Litteraturae Entomologicae by HORN & SCHENKLING (1928).

If any omission in the foregoing list (and there must be some) is found by a reader, the author would appreciate being informed thereof.

At some future date it is hoped to publish a somewhat similar bibliography of local lists of butterflies of North America, arranged by Canadian Provinces and States of the United States of America, a card index of which has been maintained for a number of years.

**Literature Cited**


Webster, Noah, 1947. See Neilson, William Allan, (Editor-in-Chief), et al., 1947.

Washington Corners, Mendham, N. J., U. S. A.