

I have sent consignments of papered insects from East Africa to several Society members, and they will, I think, agree with me on the merits of this packing.

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A SWARM OF NOCTUID MOTHS IN SOUTHEASTERN KANSAS

On May 9, 1958, I was returning from a butterfly collecting trip in Southeastern Texas where I had spent the preceding week collecting *Papilio palamedes*, *P. troilus ilioneus*, *Atlides halesus*, and a number of other butterflies all in Harris County, Tex. All the way back to Kansas I stopped along the way wherever I encountered anything likely in the way of Lepidoptera. Stopping for breakfast one morning at Conroe, Texas, yielded a good catch of *Automeris io* and *Actias luna rubromarginata* at a roadside cafe in the pine and palmetto barrens. The weather in Texas was warm and humid. As we crossed Oklahoma in the Kiamichi Mountains we drove through intermittent downpours. In one place the highway was washed out over one of the normally dry washes in the Ouachita ranges and we had to detour miles out of our way through Fort Smith, Ark., to reach Kansas. We crossed the Kansas line at Baxter Springs at about eleven o'clock that evening. By this time we had left Oklahoma's storms behind us and the evening air at Baxter Springs was still, warm and humid with only a few flashes of lightning in the southern horizon. We stopped at the south end of Baxter Springs at a filling station for gas. I saw a sight that was more spectacular than any of the southern butterflies I had caught. There were swarms of noctuid moths flying about the gas station. There were thousands of them. We had to stop every few blocks to wipe the crushed bodies off our car windshield. As we drove down the main street of Baxter Springs there were so many moths flying around the street lights that the thoroughfare was darkened by their flights casting an eerie sight to the pavement below. Since I had my collecting equipment in the car I asked my driver to stop the car and I got out and netted a quantity of the moths. Since I have a rather extensive collection of the Noctuidæ I had no trouble identifying all of the species that made up the swarms. Over half proved to be the common Army Worm, *Pseudaletia unipuncta*. Fully a third of the remaining half were the common *Chorizagrotis introferens*. The remainder were a mixture of *Autographa brassicae*, *A. ou*, *A. biloba*, *A. simplex*, *Plusia ærea*, and a few specimens of *Plusiodonta compressipalpis*.

Curiously enough members of other moth families did not seem to participate in their frenzied ranks. I searched very diligently for other moth species and found only one specimen of *Estigmene acrea* and a single specimen of *Isia isabella*, the "Isabella Tiger Moth", both Arctiids seated sedately on a Dairy Creme stand. They seemed independent of the noctuid hordes and made no attempt to join in their flight. It is thus doubtful that these two arctiid moths had any association with the noctuid flight. We reached Pittsburg, Kansas, where we spent the night before coming up to Ottawa and there were no inordinate flights of noctuids at all. These spectacular flights were apparently confined to the immediate Baxter Springs area. The flight took place on May 9th, 1958. There was no directional flight evident in the swarm, only an aimless flight about the lights. All the specimens were in good condition and looked freshly emerged and had not flown in from any major distance, in all probabilities. What factors were responsible for such a swarm I have not the remotest idea. I have never seen such a swarm of Lepidoptera personally before.

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