

## BOOK REVIEW

THE SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLIES OF NORTH AMERICA, by Hamilton A. Tyler. 1975. Naturegraph Publishers, Healdsburg, Ca. vii + 192 p., illus. + 16 plates. Price \$5.95 (U.S.) paperback, \$9.95 cloth.

This book is a pleasant blending of the scientific and popular knowledge of the North American swallowtail butterflies. The geographic region encompassed extends from the arctic into the North American faunal region of Mexico and to the southern political boundary of that country. The author has chosen to include neotropical species as well as an aid to visitors to Mexico. The format is of a convenient, almost field guide size. There is a wealth of information presented in a rather informal manner. The usual taxonomic treatment appears with keys, wing venation diagrams, etc., but also included are biogeographical data, evolutionary speculations, mimicry, hilltopping, hybridization experiments and other interesting items. There is extensive information on distribution, food plants and immatures. A nice feature, not seen in many scientific books, is a discussion of the origin of the scientific names used to describe the members of the supergenus *Papilio*.

The author divides the swallowtails into the four genera: *Papilio*, *Eurytides*, *Parides* and *Battus*. These are then subdivided into species groups within each genus forming the basis for the book chapters. The genera *Parnassius* and *Baronia* are given only brief treatment as they are not true swallowtails. For each species, the various subspecies and forms are discussed, and information is provided such that similar appearing species may be differentiated. Data are then presented for habitat, flight period, food plants, early stages and distribution.

Interspersed throughout the text are line drawings of ova, larva and pupa. There are two sets of color plates which are composed of water color renditions of the principal species and many of the subspecies discussed in the text. The plates are certainly adequate and many present rather natural portrayals of the imagines. A "color errata" noting color registration shifts to be corrected in subsequent printings is included. There are three indices: a general index, an index of swallowtail names and an index of larval food plants. A "selected" bibliography appears at the end of the book which, while perhaps selected, presents in four pages a reasonably comprehensive treatment.

The informal style may aggravate some workers, but I found it quite refreshing. The book is certainly current and cites ongoing and incompleting taxonomic and breeding studies. Generally it appeared free from typographical errors. The only criticism that I would offer is the lack of inclusion of authority names when the scientific names of plants are listed. A few food plant omissions were noted, but these are of minor consequence. It would have been helpful if the undersides of all of the members of the Old World swallowtail group (*machaon-polyxenes-bairdii*, etc.) had been figured, as in many cases, the ventral surfaces contain the necessary diagnostic characters for reliable species separation.

This book is a useful addition to the library and should appeal to the amateur and serious collector alike as an informative and ready reference.

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