

BOOK REVIEWS

MOTHS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, by E. C. G. Pinhey. 1975. Tafelberg Publishers Ltd., 28 Wales Street, Cape Town, South Africa, 273 p., 19 figures (line drawings), 63 color plates. Price \$35.95 (U.S.).

At the risk of offending the ardent rhopalocerists who have grown accustomed in recent years to the availability of exquisite butterfly books, complete with color plates, from nearly all corners of the world, it is refreshing to see, occasionally, a regionalized treatment of moths. E. C. G. Pinhey's *Moths of Southern Africa* is designed to stimulate interest in the moth fauna of southern Africa and is a broad introduction to the subject, not a definitive treatment of this entire fauna. Pinhey includes 1181 of the more common, colorful, or economically important moth species, mainly from the defined region, in the color plates (plus a line drawing of an additional species) and provides brief descriptions of them in the text. A hostplant index, glossary, substantial number of cited references, and line drawings supplement the color plates and textual information.

Using a balance of technical and nontechnical terminology, Pinhey introduces the moths by reviewing their basic morphological, ecological, and behavioral characteristics. The written portion of the introduction certainly should stir the interests of budding lepidopterists. However, I was surprised to find virtually no discussion on the genitalia that are so very useful in identification and classification, yet two pages of space are devoted to line drawings of these important structures.

Taken in their entirety, the line drawings, which make up a substantial proportion of the introductory material, are satisfactory. The beginning student might occasionally be confused by the structural terminology in the text and symbols used in some figures because a few problems are caused by combinations of printing errors and inconsistencies in symbol application. For example, Figure 5 is referred to as "fig. 3" on page 7, and "ar," the symbol for areole in the figure legend, is "Ar" in Figures 5 c, e, and f. In other figures "RS" denotes both the reniform stigma and the radial sector.

The author has chapters on "Collecting and preparing insects" and "Identification and classification." The former is rather brief, though references are provided that may be consulted for information on specific procedures. The latter also is brief, but interestingly written for its intended audience. However, the identification key to suborders and superfamilies ideally belongs here, not in the subsequent chapter entitled "Swifts and Longhorns"! Pinhey should have given figure references in the couplets of his keys, especially since his book is meant to interest and aid persons who are not professional and/or experienced lepidopterists, not discourage them. The remaining keys generally go to the family level (a few extend to the subfamily level)—beyond that the color figures and brief species accounts serve as the identification aids.

The printing quality of the color plates is excellent with the exception of a few cases where the colors of the plate backgrounds and moths are so similar that the specimens are scarcely visible. There is a problem with the organization of the plates that lessens their effectiveness and utility for identifying specimens. Namely, families, congeners, and, in some cases, the same species frequently are depicted on different plates separated by several pages of text and other plates. For example, the Limacodidae occur on plates 1, 2, 5, and 7 and adult Lasiocampidae on plates 1, 22, 24–26, and 29–30. The author should have spent less time coining almost useless, common names and more time on the overall organization of his book and embellishment of the introductory chapters.

Considering the large number of species and color plates in *Moths of Southern Africa*, the price is not unreasonable. The book should prove rather useful to those

for whom it was designed. The book's true value will be realized if a host of minds is inspired to continue the study of heterocerous species in southern Africa or elsewhere.

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LEGION OF NIGHT—THE UNDERWING MOTHS, by Theodore D. Sargent. 1976. University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, Massachusetts, 222 + xiii p., 8 color plates. Price \$15.00 (U.S.).

My introduction to the underwing moths was dramatic. As a high school student I had just taken up collecting Lepidoptera and had read with great interest the article on "sugaring" in W. J. Holland's *The Moth Book*. I had just sugared a path along a road in the northern Wisconsin forest. In the fading light of the evening I had discerned the outline of a beautifully banded underwing moth. I was forever hooked on the *Catocala*.

So it was with unexpected pleasure that I read Theodore D. Sargent's *Legion of Night—The Underwing Moths*. He has captured the romance of these unusual and beautiful insects.

Statistically the book contains two hundred twenty-two pages, and has eight colored plates depicting one hundred twenty-six specimens in color consisting of seventy-one species of underwing moths found in the eastern United States. In addition there are numerous black and white colored plates and many fine drawings.

Sargent's book gives a complete survey of the *Catocala* of the eastern United States, a summary of the current biological information on these species, and introduction to the scientific investigations which are being conducted on these moths.

The species accounts give the range, within the scope of the geographical area covered by this book, the seasonal occurrence, larval food plants, and the interesting behavioral aspects of the adults of each species. In this respect it is quite unique. None of the work done on the *Catocala* in the past has gone into these aspects. In this respect it is most helpful to the field entomologist. So few works on Lepidoptera seem to be concerned with this aspect of collecting. Every species of *Catocala* one might encounter in the eastern United States is covered completely.

Dr. Sargent gives an interesting history of the entomologists who described the species found in the area or wrote about these moths in his chapter "Of Men and Names." Thus, we get an insight into the entomological lives of such men as Coleman T. Robinson, Augustus Radcliffe Grote, Achille Guenée, Ferdinand Heinrich, Herman Strecker, William Henry Edwards, the Reverend George D. Hulst, and Francis Walker. The book contains excerpts from the published letters of several of these entomologists, particularly Strecker, Grote, and Hulst. None of these men held the others in any great esteem, and their sniping at each other makes for interesting reading. Apparently they were unaware of the laws on libel and slander. In any event there is no record of any civil actions arising out of these feuds.

Each species is accurately described, and similar species distinguished. The relative abundance or scarcity of the particular species is fully discussed. Of great importance to the collector is something about the larval habits and the habits of the adults in coming to light or to bait, or to various types of traps. The book contains much statistical material on abundance of the various species and something about the predators of the larva and adults, particularly bird and bat damage to the adults.

I would make only one criticism of the book. On the theory nobody is perfect, I would liked to have seen the plates with a lighter background. Since so many of