

BOOK REVIEWS

LIBRO ROJO DE LOS LEPIDOPTEROS IBERICOS, by M. G. de Viedma and M. R. Gomez Bustillo. 1976. Instituto Nacional Para la Conservacion de la Naturaleza, Madrid, Spain, 120 p., 82 figures (color photographs), 50 maps. Paper. Price \$5.50 (U.S.). Available from SHILAP, Apartado no. 331, Madrid, Spain.

This small paperback represents an entomological "first." Patterned after the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (I.U.C.N.) Red Data Books on World endangered species, the authors present status summaries for 50 species of Iberian Lepidoptera. Each species is treated as Endangered (5 species), Vulnerable (4 species), Rare (20 species), Endemic (16 species), or Migratory (5 species). Butterflies receive most coverage, but 13 families are covered as follows: HesperIIDae (5 species), Lycaenidae (14 species), Satyridae (9 species), Nymphalidae (1 species), Papilionidae (3 species), Epipyropidae (1 species), Zygaenidae (4 species), Saturniidae (3 species), Endromididae (1 species), and Sphingidae (2 species). With the exception of a summary page in English, the book is entirely in Spanish, as one would expect.

The treatment for each species includes sections on distribution and flight period, habitat and life cycle, status and population, and recommendations.

The intent of the book is to be a preliminary assessment of Iberian Lepidoptera in need of some conservation effort or in need of continuing scrutiny.

Apparently, the status of Iberian Lepidoptera lags behind that of the remainder of Western Europe, since only five somewhat unsuitable species are cited as Endangered: *Coenonympha oedippus* (Satyridae) is thought to be extirpated in Iberia, but is widespread in other portions of Europe; *Samia cynthia* and *Antheraea pernyi* (both Saturniidae) are both Asiatic species brought to Europe by man in the 1800's for their possible silk-producing qualities. *Epipyrops schawerdae* (Epipyropidae) may be endemic, but is known only from a single individual, and represents an esoteric family not regularly sampled by collectors; *Procris predotae* (Zygaenidae), a Spanish endemic, is the most logical candidate of the five, but still remains little investigated.

Documentation or even mention of threats to the habitats of the fifty species is largely lacking in the book. Under provisions of the United States' Endangered Species Act of 1973 most of these species could not be listed because of the lack of appropriate documentation of threats to their habitat.

It is heartwarming to see that the Spanish have begun to assess the status of their endemic Lepidoptera with an eye fixed toward future conservation efforts. Let us hope that the future efforts include further field study of potential candidates, and more importantly, acquisition, protection and/or management of the habitats upon which the more unique taxa depend.

I recommend this book to all members with conservation interests and an aptitude for reading Spanish.

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THE CLASSIFICATION OF EUROPEAN BUTTERFLIES, by L. G. Higgins. 1975. 320 p., 402 line drawings. Wm. Collins and Sons, Ltd., Glasgow. Price: £7.50 net.

Within the pages of this book are the justifications for a radically different classification of the European butterflies, one that was long overdue. The data that are included in the present book were originally to have been incorporated into the

Higgins and Riley *Field Guide to the Butterflies of Britain and Europe*, but were not. In some respects it is unfortunate that this information was not placed in the *Field Guide*; the amateur would have been exposed to it and had the opportunity to make use of it or not as he saw fit. The present volume is more likely to have a limited audience and will most likely be purchased by the professional lepidopterist and the advanced amateur only. The idea of placing a great deal of technical detail in basically an identification book is not new—Godman and Salvin interwove beautifully colored plates with illustrations of structural details very successfully in the Rhopalocera section of the *Biologia Centrali-Americana*, a work that has remained a standard reference for the last three-quarters of a century. The combination of these details in the *Field Guide* do the same thing for the European species, and the serious student cannot afford to be without it.

The illustrations, none of which is colored, are highly informative, but not overdone. The reader searching for pretty pictures will be disappointed, unless he is impressed by pictures of structural details. These details are clearly illustrated and provide much of the basis for the "new systematics" of the European butterflies. With the illustrations at hand it would be difficult for a worker to seriously question the conclusions reached.

The errors are few and far between. Most of the literature citations given are correct (I know I learned a great deal about who first proposed what higher category), and the consistency with which the oldest name is used for family-groups is laudable. The only exceptions to this are the use of Riordinidae instead of the older Nemeobiidae (there is an appeal pending before the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature for the validation of Riordinidae) and the Pierinae is credited to Swainson in 1840 while the Pieridae is attributed to Duponchel, 1832. The "Code" is specific in its assertion that when one family-group name is proposed, all other family-group names on the same stem are proposed by implication. I suspect that the Pieridae-Pierinae situation was merely an oversight. Other errors of omission or commission largely may be ascribed to Dr. Higgins not being familiar with some of the work done on this side of the Atlantic, but American authors have been far less cognizant of what has been done in Europe, so Higgins' omissions may be forgiven in this regard.

On balance, this book is a magnificent piece of workmanship and of scholarship, perhaps the best that has been done on Palearctic butterflies in recent years. No rhopalocerotist who is more than a hobbyist can afford to be without it. Now the gauntlet has been flung—we Americans need to do a similar work on the Nearctic butterfly fauna!

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