

A.C.T., in 1948. Since that time he has dedicated his life to an understanding of the Australian moth fauna, aided immeasurably by his wife Jill, who has kindly assisted Ian in countless ways. This book summarizes much of that wealth of information. Possibly the best endorsement I can offer is, this is the reference I reach for first to answer general questions on biology and taxonomy of the families of moths, despite its emphasis on the Australian fauna, halfway around the world from North America.

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MOTHS OF AUSTRALIA, by Ian F. B. Common, with photographs by Ederic Slater. 1990. Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia. Distributed by E. J. Brill (USA), 24 Hudson Street, Kinderhook, New York 12106. 535 pp., 32 color plates, 44 black & white plates. Hard cover, 18 × 25 cm, ISBN-0-522-84326-3, \$150 Australian (about \$200 U.S.).

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY RICHARD S. PEIGLER

I had not seen this book when I ordered it, but what I received far exceeded my expectations. Given that the microlepidoptera comprise the vast majority of families within Lepidoptera, here at last is a treatment that provides balance, which means that there is more coverage of the "micro" families than of the "macro" families. Taxonomic changes at all levels can be confusing to the non-specialist, so I like the way Dr. Common explains at the beginning of each family treatment the historical classification of subfamily, family, or superfamily by earlier authors. The numerous subfamilies of the Noctuidae are clearly outlined, for example.

Although the museum where I work has very few moths from Australia, this book is already proving to have considerable value in curating the moth collection because of its concise morphological descriptions and drawings for all of the families, particularly the microlepidoptera. Many of the micros that I collect are not immediately recognizable by me to family level, and I am faced with looking in moth books such as C. V. Covell's 1984 *A Field Guide to the Moths of Eastern North America*, W. J. Holland's 1903 *The Moth Book*, faunal treatments I have of southeastern Asia or southern Africa, or even the standard college textbook of entomology with keys to families, i.e., various editions of *An Introduction to the Study of Insects* by D. J. Borror and colleagues. But none of these are really adequate compared to Common's book, which presents everything so clearly and all under one cover. True, a few families and subfamilies are Australian endemics, but if one wishes to gain a good working knowledge of the moth families of the world, I am not aware of a better source. So this book will serve worldwide as a useful reference even to those "up above" who have no material from Australia and who never anticipate collecting "down under."

Moths of Australia is beautifully produced. The binding, printing, and color plates are of the highest standard. There is a generous amount of color and numerous black and white photographs showing eggs, caterpillars, pupae, cocoons, and moths in living repose, as well as pinned adults. This book is not just a compilation based on literature and museum material; Common has obviously spent countless hours in the field over many years enabling him to report first-hand observations throughout the text. The book is regrettably expensive. If you cannot afford it, try to persuade a nearby museum, university, or public library to order a copy, as it deserves to be widely available for many years to come. Books like this encourage young amateurs to move from butterflies to moths, and advanced amateurs to move to microlepidoptera.

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