This small book is a unique mixture of information about the fossil butterflies and present-day butterfly fauna of the Florissant Valley region of central Colorado. The authors report on the status of fossil butterflies and the results of a sporadic long-term survey of the region’s living butterflies.

The book is basically an annotated, illustrated list of the fossil butterflies and the living butterflies of the Florissant Valley. The Florissant Fossil Beds is one of the most important fossil insect deposits in the world, but the living butterfly fauna is relatively poor in comparison to other areas of Colorado.

The discussion of the fossil butterflies is brief and might better have appeared as an appendix. Its value is that all Florissant fossil butterflies are illustrated and discussed in the same place. For the first time in any butterfly book, the butterfly fossils are assigned common names and are also listed in a separate checklist.

There are 19 pages of introductory material that describe the ecology of the Florissant area and give background information on habitats, behavior, reproduction, and other aspects of the region’s butterflies. There is a list of pertinent references and a glossary at the end of the text.

The bulk of the book is comprised of species accounts of the butterflies now known from the Florissant Valley. There are numerous excellent black and white photographs scattered through the text (it’s a pity that they couldn’t have been in color) and nine excellent color plates of specimens and a few photos of living butterflies. The illustrations seem to be properly identified in almost all cases, but a specimen of Phyciodes tharos is identified as Phyciodes pallidus, a butterfly that apparently does not occur in the study area. To clarify “tharos-group” relationships in the book, the butterfly referred to as Phyciodes tharos pascoensis should be more properly referred to as Phyciodes selenis, as it is not consistent to have two subspecies of the same species occupying the same small area.

I would have liked more detail on the occurrence of the butterflies in the study area, and a comparison between the Florissant butterfly fauna and that of a few other well-studied Colorado areas along the Colorado Front Range.

I recommend this book as an addition to the library of any lepidopterist interested in the Rocky Mountain butterfly fauna. The prospective reader will find it to contain excellent background material for the Colorado fauna. Even though the book covers only a small geographic area, it will be useful for most montane habitats along the Colorado Front Range. Any lepidopterist who has taken or plans to take field courses about butterfly biology at the Nature Place in Florissant will find it invaluable.


Journal of the Lepidopterists’ Society
47(4), 1993, 341–342


In the 1980’s Michael Parsons was the butterfly ecologist working for the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Insect Farming and Trading Agency (IFTA). His enthusiasm and commitment helped to establish an ideal and successful integration of the utilization and conservation of the butterfly resource in PNG with studies of the taxonomy, distribution, behavior and ecology of Papuan butterflies. The need for IFTA to develop butterfly farming (technically “‘ranching’”!) in out-of-the-way areas of the country provided opportunities to investigate the faunas of remote parts of PNG. The collecting of butterflies
by villagers for the commercial side of IFTA's activities provided distributional data unusual for a Third World country.

This book covers an area of PNG, the Bulolo-Wau Valley, which is only about 350 km² in extent, although it includes the well-known Mt. Kaindi (2388 m) and other mountains. Remarkably, 373 species of butterflies and skippers have been recorded from the area. The author points out that this represents about half of the species known to inhabit the whole of PNG, including the Islands. The area also includes the IFTA headquarters, the Bulolo Forestry Institute and, of course, the Wau Ecology Institute.

The book is well organized, with a map of the Bulolo-Wau Valley and another showing the Melanesian Region and major sub-regions. The author has crammed a great deal of useful information into his Introduction, and has struck a good balance between giving help to the beginner and inexperienced, and providing up-to-date scientific information for the specialist. It is good to see the Comstock-Needham scheme of venation preferred to the esoteric and old-fashioned numerical system still favored by some lepidopterists. The narrow pages of the book have very wide margins (more than a third of the width of the page) but this does allow for the inclusion of some text figures. Those of resting attitudes of representatives of the families are particularly helpful, and indicate that the author is an expert field lepidopterist.

The main part of the book is an account of each species recorded from the Bulolo-Wau Valley. There are helpful aids, such as diagrams of wing-pattern and genitalia drawings, for distinguishing closely related species. The size range of both sexes of each species is given, essential in a book in which the figures of butterflies have been, disconcertingly, reproduced to a standard size. The information provided for each species is excellent and thoroughly up-to-date, but it demonstrates how much work still remains to be done on the fauna of even this part of New Guinea. There is a short and rather selective glossary, a list of food plants, a good bibliography, and a comprehensive index.

It is perhaps captious to mention any omission in a text so full of sound and interesting information. However, I would have liked to see a short section on the relationships between local people and the butterflies of the region—what one might call ethnolepidopterology. Certainly in some parts of PNG there is local knowledge of butterflies, including their larvae ("sneks" in pidgin), while birdwings (*Ornithoptera priamus* in most cases) are used for personal adornment. Perhaps, however, this does not occur in the Bulolo-Wau Valley.

This is a book which will be indispensable to anyone studying the butterflies and skippers of New Guinea. Unlike many more lavish and expensive texts, it is based on intimate knowledge of the species in the field. The comments on status and behavior are therefore particularly authoritative and valuable. Moreover, the excellent balance among utilization, conservation, and science is a notable feature. I hope this book will stimulate more work on these three interrelated aspects of butterflies, not only in the Bulolo-Wau Valley, or even PNG, but more widely in southeast Asia.

M. G. Morris, Furzebrook Research Station (NERC Institute of Terrestrial Ecology), Wareham, Dorset BH20 5AS, United Kingdom.