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Book Review

D'ABRERA, B. 1971. Butterflies of the Australian Region. Lansdowne Press Pty Ltd., Melbourne. 416 pp., 2362 color photographs, two pages of maps, three groups of line drawings in the text, glossary, 160 references, index, one page corrigenda, one loose insert errata. Size 13¾" x 10¼", hard covers. Printed in Hong Kong. Price: \$39.95 in the U. S.

Since Fabricius (1775) first described species of Lepidoptera from Australia, several accounts have appeared summarizing knowledge of this fauna. The most extensive of these is volume IX of Seitz's (1927) "The macrolepidoptera of the World, The Indoaustralian Rhopalocera". D'Abbrera's "Butterflies of the Australian Region" is the first work to figure all known species of butterflies inhabiting Australia, New Guinea, the Moluccas, New Zealand, and the South Pacific islands. Included are Lepidoptera of the following families: Papilionidae, Pieridae, Danaidae, Nymphalidae, Libytheidae, Satyridae, Amathusiidae, Lycaenidae, and Riodinidae. The family Hesperidae is excluded.

The book is organized into two parts, introductory and systematic. The first part includes short notes on how the text is organized, butterfly life history, mimicry and protective coloration, variation, nomenclature and classification. The history of lepidopteran collecting and study in the Australian Region is briefly summarized. This section including glossary is 39 pages long with 3½" wide margins on most pages. These margins are partly occupied by 13 groups of photographs and diagrams.

The second part, entitled "A guide to the identification of the butterflies of the Australian Region", provides data about and photographs of adults of more than 900 species. The figures are color photographs of specimens deposited in various museums. Most figures are of dorsal aspects. In addition, illustrated are the ventral sides, morphs of polymorphic species, and some immatures. Keys are not included and identifications must be made by comparing specimens with figures. Ninety-one specimens represent "types" (indicated by a red dot opposite the specimen), and six represent paratypes (indicated by a yellow dot). Fourteen taxa are described as new: three species and 11 subspecies.

The following data are given for each species: binomen and author, reference to original description, abbreviated synonymy, geographic range, status, races, depository for figured specimens, life history stages, and short description of known ones, and food plant, if known. On each page, the text is marginal. Each illustration is beside the text relevant to it.

This volume is little more than an updated illustrative companion to Seitz's "Indo-australian Rhopalocera". The sequence of arrangement of taxa, in general, is antiquated. The illustrations are of good quality, but the scale at which the individual photographs are reproduced is not indicated and the statement on the cover flap, qualifying these as "natural size" is untrue. For example, *P. demoleus sthenelus* figured on page 41, is shown to have a wingspan of 20 inches. Because illustrations are unnumbered and no list of illustrations is provided, figures in the first part can be located only by searching through the text. In the systematic section they can be found by locating the name of the relevant taxon in the index. While many of the photographs portraying immatures or adults in their natural habitats are first rate, some like that on page 48 should not have been included, for they show nothing worth recording.

Poor layout reduces the value of many of the photographs. This is particularly true of figures where the center fold cuts through the right half of the butterflies illustrated. The marginal half of most pages is reserved for the text accompanying the figures in the systematic part. The high price will hamper the sale of this book in a highly competitive market. Three other books were published on the same subject within the last three years, though

each with different emphasis. In spite of its shortcomings, "The butterflies of the Australian Region" is an important reference for lepidopterists.

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