

BOOK REVIEW

The Complete Field Guide to Butterflies of Australia, Second Edition.

Michael F. Braby (2016).

CSIRO Publishing, Carlton South., Victoria. ISBN 9781486301003, 400 pp. RRP \$49.95.(paperback).

This is another excellent butterfly book. It is completely revised from the first edition published in 2004 which in turn is a condensed version of the two volume set "Butterflies of Australia (Braby, 2000). All are published by CSIRO so of the highest quality.

If you are new to butterflies or previous editions, the contents include an introduction to the structure of the adult, higher classification, distributions and habitats, and lifecycles and behaviour followed by sections how to use the book, identifying Australian butterflies and the collecting and preservation of butterflies. These are followed by separate sections on individual families and an additional one on species from "Remote Islands". Every species has photos of dorsal and ventral views of both sexes and, where applicable, seasonal and colour variants. Included in the text are the scientific name, some common names, wing span, similar species and how they differ from the species under discussion, Variation if applicable, Behaviour, Habitat, Status and "Larval food plants". All are concise and informative but necessarily brief. Each species (except for those from Remote Islands) has a distribution map with the text, and on the facing page, four or more photos. In short everything needed to identify butterflies and perhaps most importantly, the distribution of individual species is completely updated. It is unfortunate however that the trap of using the correct common name has not been rectified in this edition.

Traditionally in Australian butterfly books, common names are applied to the subspecies level, not the species. This means that species with several subspecies are listed under the typical name with its respective common name. No attempt has been made to associate other subspecies with their respective common name. Thus the "Fuscous Swallowtail" in northern NSW and eastern Queensland is the *Canapeus Swallowtail* and the northern NT and WA subspecies is correctly the *Canopus Swallowtail*.

For those who collect butterfly books, there are a number of noticeable changes. The second edition is 45 pages longer, with most sections slightly longer and the addition of a new section on "Collecting and preserving butterflies" with all the illustrations having appeared in previous publications (with due credit). Added to the mainland fauna is the tawny coaster (once referred to by Michael as the "corny toaster"), *Acraea terpsicore* (Nymphalidae) which became naturally established in northern Australia in 2012.

It is hard to criticise this book. The format is convenient for the book to be put in a backpack and almost thin enough to put in a back pocket. It has everything needed to identify butterflies including where they occur. It is a pity that the colour-coded butterfly families in the table of "Contents" cannot be read, black (white in the previous addition) writing on blue or purple does not work. Despite the lengthy discussions on distribution and abundance, and the number of species from "Remote" islands, there is no of discussion about what these islands are or where they are located. A separate list of these islands and a general map would help. The issue also arises as to whether previously recorded species from these islands are or should be included. The Lesser Wanderer has previously been found on Ashmore Reef and Macleay's Swallowtail on Norfolk Island, but there is no indication of this on the list from "Remote" Islands.

If anything that could be added would be a small note on what individual caterpillars as well as a few tips on how to rear butterflies. I have one serious criticism of this book. It is a field guide written for both amateurs and professionals. However, the author has apparently used the latest phylogeny as a guide to the sequence of families, genera and species.



THE COMPLETE FIELD GUIDE TO **BUTTERFLIES** OF AUSTRALIA SECOND EDITION

MICHAEL F BRABY



This has resulted in the swallowtails (Papilionidae) being presented first rather than traditionally after the skippers (Hesperiidae). The sequence of some colour plates has been changed, for example Whites (Pierinae) now precede the Jezabels and there is still no apparent logic of the sequence of species within individual genera. This is not a practical change.

This book is a must have for anyone who is interested in butterflies.

REFERENCE

Braby, M.F. (2000). Butterflies of Australia. Their Identification, Biology and Distribution. CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne.

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