

BOOK REVIEW

Insects of South-Eastern Australia- An ecological and behavioural guide

Roger Farrow (2016)

CSIRP Publishing, ISBN 9781486304745, 288 pages, 215 x 148 mm.

RRP A\$45.00 (paperback)

This book takes an interesting and probably quite practical approach to the identification of insects for the casual observer. Rather than working through each order from Archaeognatha to Hymenoptera, the author categorizes insects according to their biology and habitat such as plant feeders, flower visitors, predators, blood feeders, parasites, decomposers and non-feeding perching insects. Even cave, aquatic and domestic insects get mentions. The book generally only concentrates on the larger insects and in most cases those that sit still long enough to be observed and photographed. Each category is richly illustrated with photos of numerous insects in situ, each with notes on their size and biology and where they were photographed. In addition there are a number of “boxes” with brief notes and photos on various ancillary subjects such as camouflage, defence mechanisms, rare and endangered species, introduced species and attracting insects to your garden.

The quality of the photos is generally very good and the notes on each quite interesting. While the title of the book refers to South-Eastern Australia, it really only deals with the insects of the cooler tablelands and ranges of NSW but would still be a practical and interesting tool outside this region.

In reviewing this book I read it from cover to cover and found the arrangement where small blocks of text were interspersed among the photos quite annoying, especially when the text ran over on to the next page. This would probably not be an issue if it was being used as pictorial field guide where the text could largely be ignored as each photo carries its own set of explanatory notes.

All in all, I found this to be an interesting and useful publication, well suited to the amateur nature enthusiast with an eye for the smaller wildlife of the region.

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