

Literature

Emmet, A. M. & Heath, J. (eds.) 1991: *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 7(2): Lasiocampidae – Thyatiridae with Life History Chart of the British Lepidoptera. 400 pp. — Harley Books, Colchester. ISBN 0 946589 26 7. Price GBP 49.50 (from 1992 raised to 55.00).

This volume is organized in the ordinary way with special chapters dealing with various topics in Lepidopterozoology and a systematic part reviewing groups of Lepidoptera. However, in this case the systematic part is quite limited, including only the small families Lasiocampidae (12 spp), Saturniidae (2 spp), Endromiidae (1 sp), Drepanidae (7 spp) and Thyatiridae (9 spp). The bulk of the book consists of the specialized chapters.

The first chapter (Classification of the Lepidoptera, by M. J. Scoble, 35 pp.) starts with a short historical review of the development of the classification of Lepidoptera. In the next section is presented (with tables and diagrams) the modifications made since the first volume of the series was published in 1976. Because many details of classification are highly subjective, we do not find in these tables the family Thyatiridae, for example, although it is reviewed in the systematic part of the same volume. It is treated as a subfamily of Drepanidae. In the third section, the primary divisions of the Lepidoptera are described, with discussion of important features of the taxa, and with about 130 references. It could be mentioned that Sphingidae is placed under Bombycoidea and not ranked as a superfamily; otherwise the ranking of the superfamilies are the same as in the Finnish literature.

In the next chapter M. W. F. Tweedie & A. M. Emmet review the "resting posture in the Lepidoptera" (15 pp., 64 colour pictures). Linnaeus based his classification of the moths largely on the way in which their wings are disposed. We are told that in naming the species this characteristic was illustrated by the ending of the name such as -ata, -alis, -ana, -ella and -dactyla (for Geometrae, Pyrales, Tortricae, Tineae and Alucitae respectively). The colour plates are excellent and educational. Most families are represented, and the resting posture is explained in the text. The illustrations were done by Tweedie.

The third chapter, by Emmet, "Chart showing the Life History and Habits of the British Lepidoptera" (240 pp.) is certainly the most interesting part of this volume; 2496 species of Lepidoptera found in Britain are listed, with information on life history, status, distribution, habitats, flight time, and lastly some notes on food plants or some other features of the species. The book has a separate life history chart with a key to the symbols used in the table, the symbols refer to the characteristics of larva or pupa (such as boring, gall, mine, nocturnal, spinning, gregarious), status (adventive, breeding migrant, resident etc.), habitats and flight times (on a 24-hour scale). Among the notes we also get information about the Red Data Book category. For each subfamily or family there is a short description of the major feature of the taxon. At the end of the book there are indexes to the scientific and English names of the Lepidoptera, scientific and English names of the food plants (including occasional other food substances and situations) and authors' names with abbreviations (as used in the chart). In general this chart could be thought of as synthesizing knowledge of the British Lepidoptera.

The systematic part by B. Goater and M. R. Young consists of descriptions, colour plates and distribution maps for 31 species belonging to five small families (see above). For the identification of these species this volume is not important (many books deal with these groups), but it includes complete keys (for adults) and descriptions with notes on the variability of the species in Britain.

The systematic part is arranged in the same way as in previous volumes of this series.

This book is interesting both for lepidopterologists and generally orientated entomologists. The life history table, in particular, is useful.

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