

Book review

Günter Ebert (ed.) 2003. Die Schmetterlinge Baden-Württembergs, Band 9, Nachtfalter VII. (in German). – Eugen Ulmer, Stuttgart. 609 pp. – Hardback (ISBN 3-8001-3279-6) 49.90 € (final price may vary due to postage, taxes, and handling costs).

This is the ninth volume of a multi-author monograph series on the ‘Macrolepidoptera’ of Baden-Württemberg, the southwestern-most federal state of Germany. Although published in German, this book series has long been internationally accepted to set a new standard for faunal treatments of similar regional scope. The first two volumes of the series on butterflies, published in 1991, already have attained the status of a ‘citation classic’. This new volume does not make an exception to the outstanding quality of its predecessors. Here the Geometridae are completed, with detailed accounts being given on 170 species (Larentiinae tribes Perizomini and Eupitheciini, plus subfamily Ennominae). Apart from the editor, 12 experienced German authors have contributed to the volume. The main emphasis of the book series is to provide detailed first-hand distributional and ecological data for all species that occur within the political boundaries of Baden-Württemberg. Accordingly, each species account summarizes the known distribution (globally and within the state, the latter also illustrated with detailed maps), the vertical distribution, and the phenology. Where data are available (e.g. for the *Eupithecia* species) phenology is graphically depicted for adult moths and larvae separately, or for various regions within the state of Baden-Württemberg (e.g. contrasting the upper Rhine valley with its mild climate to the montane Black Forest). Subsequently, information is given on habitat preferences, larval hostplants, nectar plants, behaviour, ecology and – where applicable – on special topics (debatable taxonomic status, unresolved ecological questions). Each species account ends with a scoring for the new Red Data List state-wide as well as for its subregions. All species are illustrated with one (rarely more) colour photographs of (mostly) live adult moths. In almost all cases also larvae or other early stages are figured, and quite often typical habitats are likewise illustrated. Yet, the books are not intended as identification guides. Only for groups where proper identifications are notoriously difficult to achieve, additional information is provided to facilitate determinations. In the present volume, this applies for example to the genus *Eupithecia*, for which colour plates of set specimens, drawings and SEM photographs of male and female genitalia, and extensive hints for identification are included. A very comprehensive references list (20 pages alone for the Geometridae) and useful indexes complete the work. This volume, and the entire series, has two major merits. First, all information presented has been most thoroughly cross-checked for reliability. Accordingly, only distributional or hostplant records that could really be verified are included. Along that way the endless perpetuation of erroneous records is interrupted – a most laudable approach, indeed. Second, the work summarizes as much information as possible for use in nature conservation, but also explicitly addresses many topics where further research is urgently needed. I have only two minor criticisms to this series. First, a brief English summary for each species (and perhaps English versions of table and figure legends and summaries of the more general chapters) would have greatly increased the utility of these fine books for an even broader international readership. Second, by the narrow focus on data collected in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg, considerable information was ignored which would otherwise have been available from neighbouring regions. However, in comparison with the impressive achievements by all volumes of this series, these minor deficits do not count much. Overall, I very strongly recommend this excellent source of information to everybody interested in the ecology, biogeography and conservation of moths (and butterflies) in central Europe. These books are not only densely packed with high quality scientific information – they are also beautiful to browse through and are absolutely worth their price.