

Bernard Skinner (Illustrations by David Wilson) 2009. Colour identification guide to moths of the British Isles (Macrolepidoptera), 3rd revised and updated edition. – Apollo Books, Stenstrup. – 325 pp. incl. 51 colour pls. – Hardcover, ISBN 978-87-88757-90-3. Price 69 € (See www.apollobooks.com).

The scope of this beautifully prepared book is all macro moths, as well as the Hepialidae, Cossidae, Zygaenidae, Limacodidae, and Sesiidae of the British Isles (including all of Ireland). It treats more than 750 species, but the exact number is unspecified. Its purpose is to provide photos of the moths to enable their identification by wing pattern. In variable species up to six or more specimens are shown on the plates.

The second edition of the work, published in 1998, has been expanded here to treat a number of additional species shown on three extra plates from the original 42, which are simply presented anew, but which are better in quality than in previous editions (P. Skou, pers. comm.; I didn't have access to previous editions). In addition, there are six new plates with 2× natural size exquisite photos of the right pair of wings of species that are more difficult to identify, with the species names mentioned directly on the plates. In some cases the upper- and undersides of the wings are presented. There is no doubt that these new plates will be found very useful, and some of the species of *Eupithecia* would have benefited from being presented on these plates as well. However, in general I found the plates all a bit dark. The plate legends give the English and scientific names with the page number on which the species treatment starts.

The text is devoted almost entirely to the species treatments, although most families are given a short introduction as well. A preface explains in one page the reasoning behind the making up of this new edition. A page of acknowledgements, misspelled in heading without final 's' and half a page of introduction follow. Among others, author B. Skinner thanked Roger Tory Peterson for his permission to use his method of pointers in some of 57 sets of black and white figures scattered throughout the text and designed to illustrate diagnostic characters. The introduction explains where the common and scientific names of plants and insects come from, as well as those used for counties. A glossary and abbreviations page precedes the species descriptions. It is supplemented by a useful drawing with labels to the diverse wing pattern elements and main body parts.

Each species description is headed by the common name, followed by the scientific name, and a plate and figure number. The descriptions per se start with or without chapters on variation and/or similar species, depending on the need for this information. The following chapter, titled *Imago*, gives wingspan, resident status, flying habit and phenology, habitat, distribution, and abundance. A *Larva* chapter then provides information on time of occurrence and host-plant(s) of the caterpillar. Sometimes a chapter on the pupa is provided as well.

The colour plates immediately follow the species description and then, a page with heading 'Further information' gives the names of the species protected by Law, a few useful references, and the names and addresses of four local entomological societies. This is followed by a list of the host-plants with their scientific names, an index of moth scientific names, and one for moth English names. The latter indices are easy to use as only the page numbers, in normal type, and plate number(s) in bold type are provided.

Leafing through the species accounts one can tell why the moth fauna of the British Isles is one of the best known, if not the best known in the world. For example, I was impressed to find the exact records known to date of several immigrant species. In my opinion, this book's purpose is achieved nicely, and it will undoubtedly contribute to making this fauna even better known.

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Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Nota lepidopterologica](#)

Jahr/Year: 2009

Band/Volume: [32](#)

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