

TROPICAL LEPIDOPTERA, 1(2): 86

BOOK REVIEW**RAINFORESTS: A GUIDE TO RESEARCH AND TOURIST FACILITIES AT SELECTED TROPICAL FOREST SITES IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA,**

by James L. Castner, with a foreward by Peter H. Raven.

1990. Feline Press, P. O. Box 7219, Gainesville, Florida 32605, USA. 380 pp., illustr. Soft cover, 14.0 x 21.5 cm. ISBN 0-9625150-2-7. Price: \$21.95 (plus \$1.50 shipping/handling).

Most lepidopterists and other naturalists have long viewed the neotropical rain forests of Central and South America as the epitome of heaven on earth for finding wildlife, especially insects. To travel there, however, especially if going alone, may prove to be a formidable task for the uninitiated. Even professional tropical biologists may spend a great deal of time seeking out appropriate accommodations and making arrangements for long-term or short-term research expeditions. Now James L. Castner, a professional entomologist at the University of Florida, has admirably solved the problem for everyone by providing this outstanding handbook for locating tourist and research facilities in selected New World tropical forest areas.

The book covers lodges, camps, remote hotels, and research stations found in Peru, Ecuador, French Guiana, Venezuela, Trinidad, Costa Rica, and Panama. Each country is introduced as to size and geography, and a map of the country is given. In a superbly comprehensive text for each listed facility in that country, the author discusses how to contact the owner or operator, succinctly describes the facility, and then treats the exact location, the logistics (including route descriptions) of getting there, the forest type in the area, the seasonality of the region (when the dry and wet seasons occur), and the possible excursions from that base, including the trail system, the costs of staying there, and general comments. The details provided on facilities, route, etc., are so complete (down to the type of bathroom, the food served, and the types of electrical outlets or prong receptacles and type of current, 110V or 220V) that you can fully anticipate the answers to all the usual questions that a lepidopterist might raise before seeing the place personally.

After this first extensive section on sites and facilities, a comprehensive list is offered of books, maps, tourist information sources, and local conservation and scientific organizations/institutions for each country.

Then follows an invaluable chapter of a hundred pages on rain forest information sources, including outstanding listings of flora and fauna guides, adventure and exploration books, details on every major organization working with or supporting rain forest conservation and research (with many that this reviewer had not previously known about), and other reference sources. This partially annotated bibliography of books, journals, and magazines will provide an excellent permanent reference in any library, personal or institutional.

If you want to learn more about organizations that run research and course programs, and that invite paying participants to join them, there is another chapter on these "hands-on" organizations

such as the Organization for Tropical Studies, Earthwatch, or International Research Expeditions. Finally, for all of us who would like to find organizations with programs that provide sources of funding for supporting our research in the tropics, Dr. Castner has provided a lengthy chapter on "Sources of Funding," with details on the organization's field of interest, size of grants, and how to apply.

Four appendices add extensive information on traveling advice for the visitor to the Neotropics (with a list of suggested travel agencies that specialize in tropical travel), a list of English/Spanish vocabulary words of particular relevance (moth, butterfly, beetle, etc.!), a list of names and addresses for tropical biologists (broken down by interest group of organisms), and a listing of selected public zoos and botanical gardens in the United States that exhibit particularly notable collections of living animals and plants from the tropics.

To summarize this book for the reader of *Tropical Lepidoptera*: buy it! It will be an invaluable reference to the tropical literature for you, even if you never travel to the Neotropics. If you do plan to go to Central or South America on your first trip, this book will be your righthand guide in planning the details of your itinerary. And if you are an experienced tropical biologist, this field guide will suggest a number of new and exciting destinations to explore.

THOMAS C. EMMEL

Division of Lepidoptera Research
Department of Zoology
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611, USA