

BOOK REVIEW

Andrew F. E. Neild. (2008). The Butterflies of Venezuela. Part 2: Nymphalidae II (Acraeinae, Libytheinae, Nymphalinae, Ithomiinae, Morphinae). A comprehensive guide to the identification of adult Nymphalidae, Papilionidae, and Pieridae.

Published by Meridian Publications, London. 276 pages, 4 maps, 1450+ color images (84 color plates), 14 black and white images, 25 composite line drawings. Laminated hardcover, glossy paper, 31.0 x 22.0 cm. Weight: 2 kgs (4 lbs, 4 oz). ISBN 978-0-9527657-1-4. Available for GBP £110 (approximately US \$190-\$200), plus £15 postage (airmail), from the author, Andrew Neild, Meridian Publications, 8 Old Park Ridings, London N21 2EU, United Kingdom, email: andrew.neild@blueyonder.co.uk, telephone (UK): +44(0)20-8882-8324, using credit card (PayPal), check or bank transfer. More information and sample plates available at www.thebutterfliesofvenezuela.com.

This volume is the second in a series of four books planned to treat over 1000 species of Venezuelan Papilionidae, Pieridae and Nymphalidae. The first volume in the series (Neild 1996) treats 276 species in the nymphalid subfamilies Limenitidinae, Apaturinae and Charaxinae, and is accompanied by 32 color plates showing about 1200 specimens. In addition, two new species and 23 new subspecies are described in the first part, and one neotype and six lectotypes are designated. Part 1 was a smashing success, setting a new standard for Neotropical butterfly books (e.g., see reviews by Austin 1997, DeVries 1997), and has left readers anxiously waiting for more.

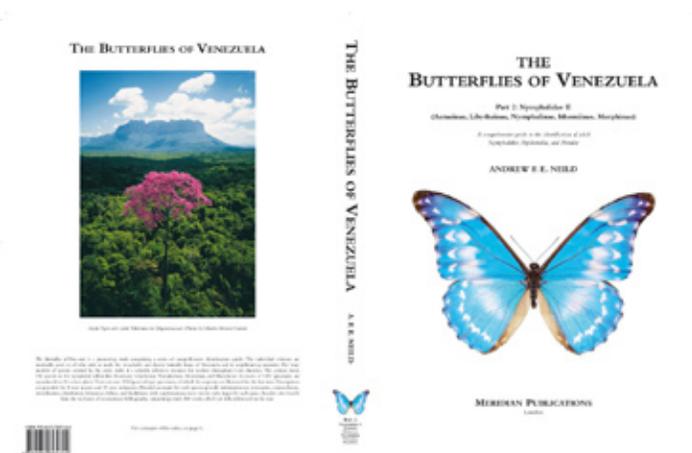
At last, Part 2 is available, treating Venezuelan members of the nymphalid subfamilies Acraeinae, Libytheinae, Nymphalinae, Ithomiinae and Morphinae (following the somewhat outdated higher classification established in Part 1, as explained by Niklas Wahlberg on page 49). Not unexpectedly, Andrew Neild has really outdone himself in Part 2! The text in Part 2 is even more detailed than that in Part 1, and Neild essentially provides a complete taxonomic review for all genera and species occurring in Venezuela. Despite fewer species being treated in Part 2 than in Part 1, (196 species or 355 subspecies in Part 2), over 1450 specimens are figured on 84 color plates, and 208 detail-packed pages are dedicated to treatments of species, genera and subfamilies. In addition, four neotypes and ten lectotypes are designated, and eight new species and 91 new subspecies are described, exposing a wealth of butterfly diversity that has remained hidden until now.

The book is divided into five sections. The first section includes a foreword by Philip J. DeVries, a preface by the author, acknowledgements, an introduction by Ángel L. Vilorio, information about the author, and miscellaneous introductory notes about the color plates, text (including terminology used, lists of abbreviations and acronyms), taxonomy and systematics. Section two is comprised of 208 pages of detailed text discussing all included taxa, from subfamilies to subspecies, with some parts authored or coauthored by various specialists, including *Actinote* species accounts (coauthored by Francisco Romero Montesino), the introduction to subfamily Nymphalinae (by Niklas Wahlberg) and Tribe Antirrhini (by Andrés M. Orellana B.). Section three includes six appendices, as follows: Data for Types of New Taxa; Data for Figured Specimens; Systematic Checklist; Some Additional Systematic Notes; Elevations along the La Escalera Road; Corrections to Part 1. Section four contains the color plates, and section five includes an extensive bibliography (about 800

entries), index, gazetteer and three maps (inside of back cover).

The text includes introductions for each subfamily and genus, followed by detailed species accounts for all Venezuelan members of each genus. Introductions to higher taxa are jam-packed full of information on their systematics, biology and ecology, and in the case of *Actinote*, also includes figures of hindwing venation and a dichotomous key to the orange-yellow species. Images of genitalia are imbedded within the text for several taxa of *Actinote*, *Telenassa*, Ithomiinae, and *Morpho*. Descriptions of the eight new species and 91 new subspecies are imbedded within species treatments, and details on type specimens are presented in the first Appendix. In addition, one neotype designation (*Papilio marcus* Schaller, 1785) and six lectotype designations (*Victorina steneles meridionalis* Fruhstorfer, 1907, *V. steneles* f. *bipunctata* Fruhstorfer, 1907, *V. steneles sophene* Fruhstorfer, 1907, *Ithomia elara* Hewitson, 1855, *Papilio deidamia* Hübner, [1819], *Morpho neoptolemus* Wood, 1863 and *Morpho neoptolemus* Bates, 1865) are proposed in the text. Species accounts are overwhelmingly detailed, and draw upon literature from throughout the range of each taxon. Unlike the dry text of many regional butterfly books, Neild's prose is rich and often humorous, always good and enjoyable reading. Perhaps the only criticism of the text would be the very small font size, making for difficult reading in poor lighting or in a moving vehicle, but this format was no doubt necessary given the massive amount of information presented in the text, and the need to minimize production cost.

Of the six appendices, Appendix 4, Some Additional Systematic Notes, is especially noteworthy. This is divided into 6 sections:





Junonia evarete and *J. genoveva*; *Morpho amathonte* Deyrolle and its “Venezuelan” subspecies *sarareus* Le Cerf; *Morpho hecuba*: a note on the enigmatic subspecies *heracles* Fruhstorfer; *Morpho rhetenor*: a note on subspecies *columbianus* (this section includes a lectotype designation for *Morpho rhetenor columbianus* Krüger, 1925); *Morpho rhetenor*: a note on “*Morpho diana*”; *Morpho telemachus*: general notes on the recognition and distribution of subspecies. The four-page discussion of *Junonia* names, the first section of this appendix, represents a major advance in our understanding of the American taxa, and is the basis for the treatment of this group by Lamas (2004) in his Neotropical butterfly checklist. Neotypes are designated for *Papilio evarete* Cramer, 1779, *Papilio genoveva* Cramer, 1780 and *Papilio esra* Fabricius, 1798, and lectotypes are designated for *Junonia occidentalis* C. Felder & R. Felder, 1862, *Junonia negra* C. Felder & R. Felder, 1867 and *Junonia zonalis* C. Felder & R. Felder, 1867, finally establishing and resolving the identities of these names! This section details the status of all names proposed for *J. evarete* and *J. genoveva*, and concludes with a revised synonymic list including all subspecies of both species.

The 84 color plates are stunning! Four of these showcase Acraeinae (*Actinote*), nine feature Libytheinae (*Libytheana*) and Nymphalinae (*Hypanartia*, *Vanessa*, *Anartia*, *Junonia*, *Hypolimnas*, *Metamorpha*, *Siproeta*, *Napeocles*, *Chlosyne*, *Microtia*, *Gnathotriche*, *Anthanassa*, *Telenassa*, *Ortilia*, *Tegosa*, *Castilia*, *Eresia*, *Janatella*), twenty-six figure Ithomiinae (*Athesis*, *Patricia*, *Eutresis*, *Olyras*, *Melinaea*, *Elzunia*, *Tithorea*, *Aeria*, *Scada*, *Sais*, *Mechanitis*, *Thyridia*, *Methona*, *Hyaliris*,

Napeogenes, *Hypothyris*, *Hyposcada*, *Oleria*, *Megoleria*, *Pagyris*, *Ithomia*, *Callithomia*, *Dircenna*, *Hyalenna*, *Ceratinia*, *Episcada*, *Pteronymia*, *Godyris*, *Heterosais*, *Mclungia*, *Hypoleria*, *Pseudoscada*, *Greta*), and forty-five magnificent plates display Morphinae (*Antirrhea*, *Caerois*, *Morpho*). At least one individual of each subspecies is figured, represented by two wings, one antenna and the body, dorsal and ventral, but several individuals of both sexes are shown for taxa that display considerable individual or seasonal variation.

A large number of type specimens are figured on the color plates, including 111 holotypes, two lectotypes, one neotype, twelve syntypes, and at least 113 paratypes, for a total of over 450 figures of types, most of which are illustrated for the first time. The plates of Ithomiinae deserve special mention. For all taxa with transparent or semi-transparent wings, dorsal images are taken against a white background, and ventral images are taken against a black background, to highlight subtle semi-transparent markings, which are often important in distinguishing similar taxa.

It is hard to write a brief review of such a masterpiece, considering the overwhelming amount of information presented and large number of taxa treated (and since an hour or two passes each time I pick up the book!). Andrew Neild is clearly a perfectionist, and all users of Part 2 will benefit from his methodology and scholarship. I sincerely congratulate Andrew on this fine achievement. Put simply, this is one of those “must have” books if you are interested in Neotropical butterflies. The sooner you obtain it, the sooner you can start enjoying it! It is worth far more than its price suggests.

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