

TROPICAL LEPIDOPTERA, 2(1): 68

BOOK REVIEW

DIRECTORY OF LEPIDOPTERA CONSERVATION PROJECTS,

by T. R. New (for IUCN/SSC Lepidoptera Specialist Group).

1990. La Trove University, Bundoora, Vict. 3083, Australia. 80 pp, soft cover (21 x 29.6cm). ISBN 0-85816-738-7. Price: \$ 5.00 US (A\$ 5 or £ 3), including postage; checks payable to T. R. New at above address).

Lepidopterists concerned about conservation of butterfly and moth species and their habitats may take heart: you are not a lone voice in the wilderness! Early in 1990, T. R. New prepared a flyer requesting information on these subjects from lepidopterist workers and conservationists all over the world, mailing out some 700 copies. In addition, he submitted notices to various newsletters and journals of many societies.

The responses to this initial attempt by Dr. New to gather knowledge of the kinds of work in progress on Lepidoptera conservation are compiled in this directory, published in December 1990. It is intended to update and enlarge this publication at intervals as more information becomes available. The present publication, however, already stands as an impressive and highly useful document. Each page is devoted to a summary of an individual project, and includes the title of the project, its status (current or length of time it has been underway), a contact person for more information, background paragraph or more (sometimes up to several pages) describing the study, a brief section summarizing the funding sources for the project, and a summary of data dissemination (unpublished reports and addresses to write for these documents, published papers and their full citations, etc.).

As one might expect from the author's location at La Trove University, there is excellent coverage of Australia, including some exceptionally interesting projects little known to other workers to date. Consider, for example, the one being carried out by E. S. Nielsen and E. D. Edwards on *The identification, biology and conservation status of Australian Castniid moths*. About 40 species of Castniidae are known from Australia, of which about 25 are described and 2 of these have not been seen for 40 years! Castniids are an ancient lepidopteran group that are believed to have inhabited Gondwanaland before its break-up by the beginning of the Cenozoic Era, around 63-60 million years ago. Today, they inhabit grasslands and sedgeland in Australia, plant communities which are poorly studied and more poorly conserved. These communities are particularly devastated in Australia by agricultural destruction. In the New World tropics, by contrast, these moths occur primarily in tropical rain forest areas! There are also a number of fascinating studies on butterflies and other moth groups which are summarized for various areas of Europe and North America, even including Bermuda. Hence this book is an indispensable starting point for learning what is going on today in the world of invertebrate conservation and how such studies are helping to save remaining areas of wilderness.

Anyone interested in Lepidoptera conservation and ecology should order a copy of this immediately for their professional library as well as general reading interest. Likewise, any study

not represented in the present printing should certainly be summarized for the next printing, and if the reader is engaged in such work, he or she ought to make a note now to see that a full description is submitted to T. R. New during 1991. Dr. New has done an admirable job of preparing these study summaries and is to be commended for his work in making this information available to a worldwide audience of lepidopterists and tropical as well as temperate conservationists and ecologists.

THOMAS C. EMMEL

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