

MARIPOSAS DE CHIAPAS

by Roberto G. de la Maza and Javier de la Maza

1994. State of Chiapas, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, Mexico. 222 pp., 100 fig., 23.5 x 31 cm. Price: N\$ 250.00 (Mexico) cloth (ISBN: 968-6258-34-5). Obtainable from: Govt. of Chiapas (Attn: Cristina Arce), Calle Toledo No. 22, Colonia Juárez, México, D.F., Mexico.

The authors of this book are recognized authorities on Mexican butterflies. Their experience and huge collection allowed them to write this valuable work. With it, Roberto and Javier de la Maza show us, once more, that field work performed with quality may produce great works. This book will be an obligatory one for amateurs and professionals studying Mesoamerican butterflies.

The book consists of a presentation, a brief introduction, three chapters and two annexes. The content is reinforced by a series of excellent quality pictures (over 100) and printed on high quality couché paper, making it very attractive.

After a foreword by the unfortunate ex-governor, the late Elmar Setzer, the book's first chapter is divided in five sections, including heterogeneous subjects, superficially described going from the description of life cycles, Mexico's fauna, Chiapas' fauna, the physiographic and vegetational description of the State, to the historical background of butterfly studies in Chiapas, an issue treated with original information and great detail, compared with previous works.

The second chapter, "La fauna de las mariposas chiapanecas" (The fauna of Chiapanecan butterflies) is divided into 15 subjects: geographical distribution, distribution in the forest, activities, thermoregulation, feeding, territorial defense, patrolling, mate search oviposition, defense against predators, death, function in nature's balance, are we destroying them?, endangered species, preservation of Chiapanecan butterflies. All these subjects occupy 95 pages, out of which 72 are pictures and watercolor paintings of butterflies in their environment, illustrations of the mimetic patterns described in 6 pages and distribution maps.

The third chapter includes the classification of Chiapas' Lepidoptera. It gives a general overview of butterfly classification by the ethnic groups in the area and the terminology used by specialists. Each family and subfamily, is described, pointing out the group's origin, the number of species in Chiapas and their distribution, with some biogeographical hints, plants used in larval nourishment and some ethological aspects. All these supported by pictures of eggs, larvae and adults.

Appendix I, is essentially an inventory of the geographic-climatic distribution of the butterflies from Chiapas and a classification of mimetism proposed by the authors. It also points out the altitudinal range of each species and its preservation status. It lists 1,194 species from Chiapas, 759 of which are Papilionoidea. This appendix may be considered the most important part of the book, as it gives the taxonomic list of the diurnal butterflies of Chiapas; up to now, only for four states of Mexico we have a trustful and relatively complete list. This tabular list gives rich information on the distribution of the butterflies from Chiapas. This appendix is a valuable synthesis. In general, it follows the tabular format employed in previous works by the group of the Museo de Zoología de la Facultad de

Ciencias, UNAM, which is comparative and adjustable to new proposals. At the same time, it is an implicit recognition of the influence they had from other groups of lepidopterists.

The second appendix is a list of 51 butterfly species considered, albeit with no solid reason by the authors, locally endangered; indeed, they do not discuss the agents or causes which have put them in that condition, especially conversion, simplification, reduction or damage of their habitat and other anthropogenic factors like collection abuse by traders and students, in previous decades.

The book contains a number of high quality photographs of the different species that inhabit Chiapas, with valuable comments by the authors about geographical distribution, ecology and history of the studies of the butterflies of that state.

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As it was supported by the administration of Chiapas, it is somewhat difficult to obtain. You may get it from the representative of the Government of Chiapas, Miss Cristina Arce. Its price is N\$250.00 plus mailing expenses. It is also possible to get it through the offices of the Miguel Alvarez del Toro Zoo in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas.

Due to the fact that the printing is not large, it is necessary to get in touch with the above addresses as soon as possible, so that you may get your volume. We can assure you that you will be happy to own a copy.

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