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BOOK REVIEW

THE OWLET MOTHS OF OHIO, ORDER LEPIDOPTERA FAMILY NOCTUIDAE, by Roy W. Rings, Eric Metzler, Fred J. Arnold, and David H. Harris. 1992. Published by College of Biological Sciences, The Ohio State University, in Cooperation with Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife and the Ohio Lepidopterists, Columbus, Ohio 43210. VI + 219 pp., 9 text figures, 8 color plates, 8 black and white plates. Soft cover, 8.5 x 11 in. (21.6 x 27.9 cm), ISSN 0078-3994, \$20.00 U.S.

The authors are to be commended for producing an extremely useful and thoroughly complete compilation of this fascinating but frequently ignored group of Lepidoptera. It is, without a doubt, the finest state systematic checklist that this reviewer has previously read and one that will probably not be exceeded in the near future. This monograph, a systematic checklist of the owlet moths (Noctuidae) of Ohio, is the second monograph to present the lepidopterological results of a cooperative effort among the Ohio Biological Survey, the Ohio Lepidopterists, and the Ohio Department of Natural History. It follows a very comprehensive survey of the state's butterfly fauna, "Butterflies and Skippers of Ohio", by David C. Iftner, John A. Shuey, and John V. Calhoun.

The first 22 pages are devoted to an introduction, nomenclature and systematics, collection and preparation of specimens, identification, development biology, conservation, and a systematic checklist of the owlet moths of Ohio. The annotated checklist, which makes up the bulk of the text, covers 708 species of Ohio's noctuids in a systematic checklist that provides nomenclature current through 1991. The annotated checklist cites references to illustrations of the species, status as to relative abundance (i.e. endangered, threatened, special concern, etc.), lists the species' known larval host plants, presents historical information as to earliest and latest year of record, depicts distributional ('dot') maps for each species, and uses horizontal graphs to indicate the seasonal flight pattern. In presenting each species' account, the format is easy to use because the family, genus and species names are printed in bold type; Hodges and McDunnough checklist numbers and plate numbers (if illustrated) are also in bold print. Remarks are presented with many species which provide identification tips (a useful addition) and other useful and interesting information.

Following the annotated checklist are sections on owlet moths that qualify for special attention in Ohio, descriptions of special habitats, moths considered as migrants and a hypothetical checklist of moths in Ohio, species excluded from the checklist (due to previous erroneous data and/or identification), host plants and list of host plant names and substrates with reference to Hodges' checklist numbers, and a glossary of terms.

The appendices includes regional lepidopterists' societies, Ohio county abbreviation code, literature cited, useful publications in the study of Noctuidae and an index to owlet moths via Hodges' checklist numbers. The 8

black and white plates include 3 plates that show a selected number of eggs of Amphipyridae, Cuculliinae, Hadeninae and Noctuidae. The remaining black and white plates depict mature larvae of 30 species of Catocalinae, Acronictinae, Amphipyridae, Cuculliinae, Hadeninae and Noctuidae. The eight colored plates illustrate 238 species of owl moths, including species that have never been illustrated in color, i.e. Herminiinae, Hypeninae, Sarothripinae, Rivulinae, Hypenodinae and Nolinae. Also illustrated are species that are very similar in appearance and are shown next to each other to allow easy comparison. These plates illustrate 324 specimens.

The illustrated specimens are shown at life size and represent immaculate and properly prepared specimens; however, not all of the illustrated specimens were collected in Ohio. It is assumed the authors wished to depict the most accurate and easily identified specimens to further assist users, and to encourage more study of Ohio's noctuid fauna. The colors are accurate and should be of tremendous help to all users of this checklist.

The authors encourage the conservation of all species, particularly those classified as endangered and threatened, under the section "Conservation of Owl Moths" (p. 10). They give the impression of comparing noctuids to butterflies with the comment "the collector should examine netted specimens and immediately release those of inferior quality, ones with tattered wings and/or missing appendages or runts." Those of us who regularly collect noctuids using UV lights with vertical sheets and UV or bait traps cannot readily make this distinction of specimen quality until the specimen is immobilized in a killing jar. Even females cannot always be easily determined at a lighted sheet, or in a bait trap, until a closer examination is made using forceps or a binocular microscope. One could easily read into this section that all trapping of noctuids (one of the best methods of sampling moths) should be discouraged.

As stated before, this annotated checklist is the most comprehensive and the best organized treatment of a state's noctuid fauna seen to date. Avocational lepidopterists, biologists, zoogeographers, conservationists and ecologists, whether Ohio residents or not, will find this publication a valuable addition to their library. The \$20.00 price is certainly reasonable. It is very encouraging to see a reasonably priced, high-quality treatment of U.S. Lepidoptera as compared to the proliferation of very expensive and little used books featuring exotic Lepidoptera. Lastly, this new book should stimulate lepidopterists to add more species and distributional data to Ohio's noctuid fauna.

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