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Dragonflies of Indiana by James R. Curry, 2001. Indiana Academy of Science, 303 pp., hardcover. ISBN 1-883362-11-3, \$32.00

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BOOK REVIEW

***Dragonflies of Indiana* by James R. Curry, 2001.**

Indiana Academy of Science, 303 pp.,
hardcover. ISBN 1-883362-11-3, \$32.00

Every once in a while you buy a book sight unseen, that surpasses any expectation that you may have had. That is the case of *Dragonflies of Indiana* by Jim Curry. It is apparent, from the very cover, binding, layout, and paper, that this is a well-crafted book. That's even before I read anything.

This book was a complete surprise to me. I recall sending someone in Indiana a photo of E. B. Williamson for a book he was working on. This was before I ventured into a survey of Michigan Odonata, so I suppose I wasn't exactly thinking much about a book on the *Dragonflies of Indiana*. I also forgot all about it until I purchased the copy of Curry's book. This was a good thing, because then I would have been waiting for a book on the *Dragonflies of Indiana*! This book is well-written and beautifully designed, and deserves high praise for its attention to detail and its usefulness.

The *Dragonflies of Indiana*, is without a doubt, a work that E. B. Williamson would approve of. It is very well-illustrated with clear, large photographs; line drawings of pertinent details when appropriate; and it even has keys to families, genera, and species! Each species is allotted a two-page spread with excellent photos of the adults, a range map, flight period graph, recognition hints, and information on habitat and behavior. In summary, just about everything you need. Curry has also included brief sections on larvae, conservation, collecting, and habitats. I also appreciate the nicely done history of Odonata work in Indiana, dating back to the time of Thomas Say. The section on collecting was also appreciated, since it is absolutely necessary to establish a link between collecting vouchers for a survey and producing a book of this sort. The photographs are excellent, and Curry took most of those used in the book, which is a remarkable feat.

If I have one quibble, it is a small one, and not of the book. Curry indicated that the records are based on current and historical records, meaning that he consulted the literature of Williamson, Montgomery, and others, in addition to providing specimens from his own field work. What I would have liked to have seen was an effort to access our massive collection of Indiana material that is housed here at the UMMZ. The UMMZ collection is mentioned in the book, but I wish Curry had looked through the collection. I suspect we have additional records that reflect changes in taxonomy as well as newer collections.

The *Dragonflies of Indiana* is a valuable guide for Ode watchers at any level, and is perhaps the best new publication on Odonata or any other group of insects at the state-level that I have seen in quite some time. It now only needs to be accompanied by the . . . Damselflies of Indiana! If you live anywhere in the Midwest (or not), you should buy a copy. At a suggested price of \$32.00, the book is an absolute bargain, and the Indiana Academy of Sciences should also be commended for supporting such a beautiful and timely

volume. I purchased my copy via Amazon.com, and you can probably also buy a copy directly from the Indiana Academy of Science.

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