

A Photographic Field Guide to the Butterflies of the Kansas City Region

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A PHOTOGRAPHIC FIELD GUIDE TO THE BUTTERFLIES OF THE KANSAS CITY REGION. By Betsy Betros. 407pp. ISBN 978-1-933466-86-6. \$24.95 US. 5.5" x 8.5" softbound, lavishly illustrated with over 1100 color photographs. Kansas City Star Books, Kansas City, MO. Date of publication August 2008.

This is an incredibly well-researched book, as evidenced by the very first two names under Acknowledgements: Richard Heitzman, and Floyd & June Preston. The book is aimed at everyone from brand-new beginner to serious, long-time students and should satisfy both groups admirably.

Beginning sections include: Butterfly or moth?; Parts of a butterfly; Names and nomenclature; Common and Latin names; Stages of a butterfly's life; Butterfly predators, disease, parasitoids; What do caterpillars & adults eat?; How butterflies spend the winter; Monarchs—extreme overwintering; Rearing caterpillars; Gardening for butterflies (with tables of adult nectar plants and caterpillar host plants); and many other topics, including good coverage of field equipment and photography.

The species accounts are the meat-and-potatoes of this book, treating 100 species of the Kansas City Region plus another 31 rare species and strays from

adjacent areas. The species accounts are arranged by family and include upper- and underside views, where possible, of both sexes and occasional color variants. Larvae and chrysalides are given for a number of species as well.

The vast majority of the photos are of live, perched specimens, but some spread material is also included for comparison of "look-alike" species (using white circles or lines to elucidate important differences). It also includes extensive coverage of the skippers and has a comparison key for the upper- and undersides of their wings.

On each page facing the photos of a given species are a series of charts indicating habitat (7 categories), adult nectar sources (6 categories), larva nests (Y, N), winter stage (none, egg, larva, pupa, adult, or migrant), # of broods (1–4, unknown), courtship (patrol, or perch), adult flight (by months), egg laying (singly, cluster, + six substrate choices), and status (resident, migrant, immigrant, stray).

In addition to the concise information given in the boxes, the facing page also includes: distributional data for Missouri, Kansas, Greater Kansas City, and general range; similar species; larval food; variants; other names; and other information.

As if this wealth of data weren't enough, there are

also many interesting facts and personal anecdotes given in the captions for most images.

The book concludes with references used for butterflies, plants, and gardening; additional selected reading; two-plus pages of websites; two page essay on “developing an interest in butterflies;” and 16+ pages of plant species referenced in the book. If only every major population center could have such an excellent resource !

To order the book, call StarInfo at 816-234-4636 and say “operator,” or go to www.TheKansasCityStore.com.

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