

Mariposas Diurnas de la Comunitat Valenciana

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BOOK REVIEW

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MARIPOSAS DIURNAS DE LA COMUNITAT VALENCIANA by Sergio Montagud Alario and José Antonio García Alamá. Publisher: Generalitat Valenciana, Spain, 471 pp; numerous color illustrations and distribution maps throughout, plus 40 composite color plates of adults, and 9 of larvae. Publication 2010; Soft cover ISBN 9788448252557; Price 20 Euros (approx. \$25 US). Available from the author: Sergio Montagud Alario, C/ Mar 43, 1^o-4^a, 46003, Valencia · SPAIN. E-mail: sergio.montagud@uv.es

The Region of Valencia, Spain embraces 23,259km² of the Iberian Peninsula where elevations rise from sea level on the coast, to over 1,800 m on some inland mountains. The area of Valencia contains a diverse patchwork of Mediterranean habitats and microclimates that support a surprising diversity of butterflies. One needs to consider that the butterfly fauna of Valenciana embraces over 70% of all butterfly species known from the entire Iberian Peninsula. By employing scholarship, enthusiastic field and museum experience, and digital technology the authors of *Mariposas Diurnas de la Comunitat Valenciana* provide us with a richly detailed and beautifully illustrated treatment of the 159 butterfly species. Nearly all pages in the book have color photographs that illuminate butterfly identification, natural history, ecology, habitat distribution, and concerns about habitat conservation.

The book is composed of five major sections. Section 1 introduces the reader to the motivation behind the book, advice on how to use the book, its geographical context, and a section on butterfly morphology useful for identifying them, and how the Natural History Museum of Valencia and numerous collaborators supported the work. Section 2 represents the largest section and devoted to what I think of as the species accounts. Each richly illustrated account includes detailed sections on identification, distribution, habitats,

biology, larval food plants, concerns for conservation, and additional field observations on behaviors. The photographs of adults, early stages and habitats in nature are all uniformly good, and despite their small size; the range maps are easily readable. Section 3 consists of two parts. First there are traditional color plates of adults of museum specimens for identification. These are very good, comprehensive and often depict multiple specimens showing the range of variation in wing coloration for each species. In the second part we are treated to color photographic plates of the caterpillars for nearly every one of the 159 species. These are uniformly excellent. Section four is comprised of an epilogue detailing the conservation status and likely fate of particular species and habitats, a bibliography, and an alphabetical index.

Lets be honest, there are many treatments of European butterflies. Some are books for the field or library, and nowadays there are others that exist as web sites. Given tangible book offerings over the past century and current offerings using digital technology, it is fair to say the European butterfly fauna is rather well known. But well known doesn't necessarily translate as pedestrian. In talented hands the well known can be transformed into something new and inspiring. The current offering, *Mariposas Diurnas de la Comunitat Valenciana*, represents a book that, in my opinion, lifts the field guide to a new height. It is an identification guide, field biology and conservation tool all in one that can be used beneficially even by those who do not read Spanish. The enthusiastic and talented authors have created an outstanding book that is useful, creative and thought provoking. Everyone interested in the biology of Lepidoptera should own this book.

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