

useful but, alas, are not presented. To conclude, this volume can be useful mainly as a guide for acquiring subsequent information as it falls short of what one would expect from the title.

OLENA VATAMANIK, *Soil & Crop Sciences Section, School of Integrative Plant Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York*



ZOOLOGY

INSECTS AND OTHER ARTHROPODS OF TROPICAL AMERICA.

By Paul E. Hanson and Kenji Nishida. A Zona Tropical Publication. Ithaca (New York): Cornell University Press (Comstock Publishing Associates). \$37.95 (paper). viii + 375 p.; ill.; index. ISBN: 978-0-8014-5694-7. 2016.

This was a difficult review to write. When I received my copy of this handsome volume, I thought I would be able to deliver a prompt review. Things did not quite work out like that.

If possible, this book is too informative and enthralling, as I had difficulty hanging onto my own copy to give it proper consideration. The volume promptly wandered from my desk in the entomology collection at the natural history museum. When I recovered it and brought it home, my spouse made off with it. I then brought it to a rainforest field station for a specialty course in insects, but it was popular with the students. When visiting with the director of the station—an entomologist extraordinaire—I noticed he had his own copy at hand, decorated with dozens of flags as bookmarks. Eventually, I found the opportunity to spend quality time with Hanson and Nishida's work.

At first, your attention will be drawn to Nishida's gorgeous photographs, great in number throughout the whole book. Reading more deeply, I found the images were not selected to stun with beauty (although they do), as they illustrate the salient features of the animals, illustrating Hanson's prose describing the biology of the creatures. This volume is a true collaboration between writer and photographer. It is hard to not be gobsmacked by the abundance and variety of Neotropical insects. This book deftly manages the depth/breadth tradeoff—a challenge that I imagine has deterred many potential authors in the past.

This volume is a hybrid: half field guide and half natural history narrative. It is designed to be particularly useful for nonbiologists. The first sections, with lessons in evolution, classification, structure, function, and natural history can fit right into a course for nonmajors in insect biology. After these

preliminaries, the book then helps you figure out the bugs in front of you, and provides engaging natural history accounts. Readers are not punished with taxonomic keys. Instead, wisely delineated sections with accompanying images separate out major groups with clarity. Admittedly, although it is well organized, there is a lot of information and nonexperts might choose to digest the work section by section, in moderate doses. After all, there are so many kinds of insects. Reading this volume is like having a chat with a very experienced natural historian, regaling tales of the most common and most fascinating insects. I would hope that every casual visitor to the Neotropics is armed with this publication, and I expect that all biologists will soon be toting their own copy as well.

TERRY McGLYNN, *Biology, California State University Dominguez Hills, Carson, California and Entomology, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, California*

THE COMPLETE FIELD GUIDE TO BUTTERFLIES OF AUSTRALIA. Second Edition.

By Michael F. Braby. Clayton South (Australia): CSIRO Publishing. AU \$49.95 (paper). xi + 384 p.; ill.; indexes to common names and to scientific names. ISBN: 978-1-486-30100-3. 2016.

PARROTS OF THE WILD: A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE WORLD'S MOST CAPTIVATING BIRDS.

By Catherine A. Toft and Timothy F. Wright; Foreword by James D. Gilardi. Published in collaboration with the World Parrot Trust by the University of California Press, Oakland, California. \$39.95. xx + 345 p.; ill.; index. ISBN: 978-0-520-23925-8 (hc); 978-0-520-96264-4 (eb). 2015.

Parrots and their allies are among the most appreciated birds by humans, either as biological models but also as companion animals. They are also of great importance in some cultures and are crucial in ecosystems as seed dispersers. Despite this, they are also one of the groups of birds more threatened by illegal traffic in the world, one of many reasons why several species are listed in the categories considered by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Therefore, there is a great need to have detailed knowledge of every biological aspect of these birds in order to develop new research, but also for its conservation.

This book represents a really good compilation of the state of knowledge of the world's parrots, summarizing all available information from the 19th century to date. It is intended to be a volume that covers all aspects of the biology of this group of birds, but for a wide audience, ranging from specialists to general readers who would like to know