

BOOK REVIEW

MILLER J.C., JANZEN D.H. & HALLWACHS W.: 100 BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS: PORTRAITS FROM THE TROPICAL FORESTS OF COSTA RICA. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2007, 256 pp., ISBN 978-0-674-02334-5.

These authors are well known for their long-term studies on the fauna of Costa Rica. They not only publish scientific papers, but also bring their results to a wider public which love nature, the tropics and butterflies. One such work is this book, which is on 100 species of Costa Rican butterflies and moths. After general chapters about butterflies (and one chapter about the origin of “Area de conservación Guanacaste” = ACG), the authors continue with a short story about each of the 100 insects. Final chapters inform readers about the conditions in Costa Rica, the ACG Research and parataxonomists, called “gusaneros”. There is a photograph of each species, which very unusually is against a black background. Each serves to show the contrast of wing pattern against the dark condition in inner parts of tropical forests. Unfortunately, some of the photographs are out of focus

and some (for instance, *Morpho amathonte*) look quite unnatural, because of the flash light was too powerful.

I think the stories about butterflies and moths are the most valuable part of book. They are of a different kind – host plant use, history of ACG research, work with local people etc. Questions arise while reading this book. For instance, what was the original habitat in the past of species now dependent on human disturbance, like *Cosmosoma cingulatum* or *Opsiphanes cassina*? It is very important to know that there are also Neotropical species of butterflies that live outside the dense forests and are potentially endangered by the “rain-forest lobby”. My heretical idea is that dense forests were not everywhere and that the extinct Central-American megafauna which, according D.H. Janzen, were important in the dispersal of some of tree fruits, had an impact on the habitats.

One other comment – *Kloneus babayaga* means “son of a witch”, not “son of a bitch”.

What to say to end? Nice book for all people, who love nature, the tropics and butterflies.

Z. Fric