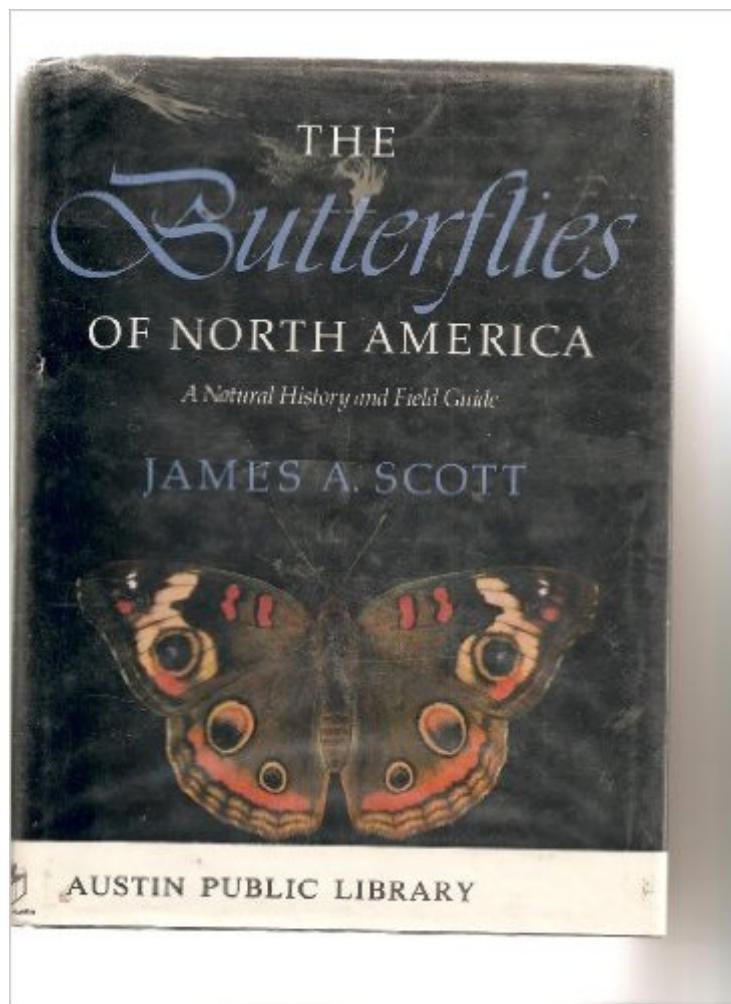


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The Butterflies Of North America: A Natural History And Field Guide



Synopsis

The only field guide to cover all North American butterfly species, this monumental work is also a complete natural history, fully describing the biological and ecological world of butterflies in general. It is without question the most important book on butterflies in several decades, and the most complete treatment of a major butterfly faun ever published. The book is written at several levels of detail, most of it accessible to anyone, and employs the minimum of technical terms necessary for ensuring scientific accuracy. Extensive introductory material—a book in itself—stresses butterfly biology and ecology: structure, flight, metamorphosis, hibernation, physiology, roosting, migration, mating, egg laying, intelligence, social behavior, larval and adult foods, enemies, mimicry, variation, evolution, habitats, distribution, and conservation. The main text is arranged in phylogenetic sequence, and characteristics or behavior common to all members of a family, subfamily, or tribe are discussed at those levels. The skippers, a large group often excluded, are treated in full. Several unique features make identification easier and more certain than with any other field guide. First, every species (and many subspecies) of butterfly ever recorded north of Mexico (or in Bermuda or Hawaii) is treated at length and illustrated in color. Over 1,800 butterflies representing all 679 species (males, females, uppersides, undersides, subspecies, etc.) are illustrated on 42 full-page plats. Another 136 color photographs illustrate the various life forms in natural habitat: eggs, larvae, pupae, and the more familiar and more spectacular adults. The author also provides a catalogue listing all known host plant genera and the specific butterfly larvae that eat them; techniques for collecting, raising, and studying butterflies; bibliographies of the most useful plant books and other sources to further the study of butterflies; and an index of all common and scientific butterfly names and all technical terms taken up in the text. In short, this book is indispensable for pursuing a hobby or scientific interest in butterflies. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

This book is a superb natural history. The author has obtained information from studies in scientific journals and from experts in the field. He consulted 700 sources for information on how butterflies overwinter. There is a wealth of detail. For the Spring Azure alone, he describes four subspecies and six forms, giving appearance, range, and flight periods of each. 56 of its host plants are listed, the most common ones marked with an asterisk. There are 10 photographs of the forms. Host plants for all butterflies are listed in alphabetical order in the index with the species numbers on the same line. There are better books for use as a field guide. This book is too big (8x10) to carry in a pocket or binoculars case. I would be afraid of damaging this large, relatively expensive book. The sheer number of photographs makes a quick tentative identification harder. This is a book that any butterfly enthusiast should add to his library. However, he should start his library with one of the smaller guides, such as *Butterflies Through Binoculars: The East*, the *Golden Guide*, or one of the regional guides.

By far the best single volume covering the North American butterflies. I have only one reservation. I don't know if this is a cultural thing, but US guide books tend towards colour photos instead of drawings. For a foreigner (UK) who hasn't been brought up with the American fauna, it is nearly impossible to tell from a photo which marks on an insect's wing are characteristics of the species, and which are that-own-specific-individual-in-the-photo's unique birth marks, imperfections etc. The better of the European butterfly guide books, and most of the world's better bird books all use high quality generalized drawings/paintings. Superb overall quality and an absolute must for anyone with the slightest serious interest.

Probably the most valuable feature of this book are its colour plates, which depict a huge amount of subspecies and variations. As the colour plates are made up of photographs and not drawings, the species have certain natural defects and thus make it easier to identify species caught in the wild. The text is also exceptional, pointing out minute differences between species and describing in great detail their natural behaviour. Another extremely useful feature is the maps, which point out

the exact distribution of species throughout North America. This is a wonderful book and belongs in the library of any naturalist, scientist, or entomologist, both amateur and professional.

This is a great reference book, and if you have patience, you can search through it and find the answers to so many questions about butterflies. This is basically a textbook, not a butterfly ID book and definitely not something you will take along with your binoculars on a field trip. But it wasn't meant to be a field ID book. It treats the topic in great depth and is very readable. I am so glad that I bought it!

I really appreciate owning this book. It has a huge number of pictures and allows for much more specific identification than the typical field guides. The arrangement of the book, however, makes it a little time-intensive to use. For this reason, and it's a little large, I would not recommend it as a field guide. It is a great book to have when you are pinning, or to really identify down to the species level, or to nail-down regional variations.

This is what I was looking for and it surpassed my expectations. I was thinking about a field guide to butterflies but instead opted for this tome which has wonderful pictures and more info about butterflies than I could realize. Probably more in depth than I could ask for but its far better than superficial work that leaves a bunch of questions behind. Great service from the seller, book arrived in the condition promised and very quickly.

This is a great resource for identifying butterflies. Species that resemble each other and are often confused are located on the same color plates for easy identification. Plenty of good life history information too.

this is an outstanding book that is a must for any serious amateur butterfly fan. i was skeptical because he covers all of north america, but he focuses in on my local orange county butterflies even more than most local guides. a great book, too big to schlep. take your photo and go home and study. it belongs in your handy reference library.

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