

OUT AND ABOUT - FIFTY YEARS OF WILDLIFE WATCHING.

DOUG GILROY, 1998, Fifth House Ltd., Calgary, AB. 150pp. Soft Cover \$18.95.

Doug Gilroy lives in the resort town of Regina Beach, along the shoreline of Last Mountain Lake, Saskatchewan. Now 82, he began writing about the outdoors as a young man. His column "Prairie Wildlife" appeared for the first time in 1954 in *The Western Producer*, published in Saskatoon by Western Producer Publications, a division of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. Gilroy has had four books published by Western Producer Prairie Books; the first book appeared in 1967. He also has had articles published in *Blue Jay*, and has been invited locally to present numerous slide-illustrated lectures about wildlife.

Out and About is a collection of 55 short stories previously published in *The Western Producer*. As would be expected, the articles are each about two pages of single-spaced text. Each article is headlined with a pencil sketch by Gilroy of a family of ducks resting on a marsh. The drawing is very attractive, delicate and serene. A small colour photograph from Gilroy's personal collection also accompanies each article. The subtext for each photograph identifies the subject, and provides a few words of interpretation. The book publisher has done a terrific job of reproducing the photographs, which add colour and interest throughout.

Out and About begins with "Welcome to the Wild", his first article on prairie wildlife for *The Western Producer*, published 7 January 1954. The article provides an overview of various wildlife

that live near his farm, and this sets the stage for subsequent articles that provide more information about the plants and animals in his local area. Unfortunately, there is no particular arrangement for the sequence of articles. The book is a veritable potpourri of observations and stories collected from readers of his "Prairie Wildlife" column. *Out and About* stretches from a short discussion of sow thistle and how plants have evolved different mechanisms for seed dispersal, to such topics as rescuing a great horned owl from a grain dryer. Each article begins with a different topic, and then within any given article Gilroy often digresses in the next paragraph to other topics or observations. This tendency to change subject material among paragraphs creates confusion and is quite unsatisfying. As I read this book, I kept asking myself: "what happened to the original idea at the top of the article?" In any case, the articles are interesting and entertaining, and they add to the collective experience of many of us who were born and raised on the Canadian prairies and who subsequently developed an interest in natural history.

An important deficiency in *Out and About* is the absence of Latin. Latin is needed to identify the species of Gilroy's countryside. Use of vernacular may be adequate for a local prairie audience, however, local names may be confusing to a wider readership. For example, Gilroy refers to "purple or ball cactus" and "golden peas." I am guessing, but I

think he means the pincushion cactus, *Mamillaria vivipara*, and my guess is that golden peas he is referring to are golden-bean, *Thermopsis rhombifolia*. I am totally lost to identify the butterflies "that come to call." A retrofit of scientific names by an editor would have increased the overall value of his book. Another short-coming of the book is the absence of references to little known and historical facts that Gilroy sprinkles throughout his book. Documentation of the various facts would greatly increase the value of his book, and make it more interesting and challenging. And, I would have preferred if Gilroy had included the original dates for each article. Without a date on each article, Gilroy's observations of nature's fluctuations of abundance and scarcity have no lasting meaning. For example, while Gilroy records the spring migration of Black-bellied plovers in southern Saskatchewan, he does not provide the date of this observation.

Gilroy notes that white-tailed deer and the mule deer lived on his farm, but he mentions nothing of their different ecology, or how they may have inter-mixed. He mentions that his

favourite wildlife on the farm is the western chipmunk, but does not explain why this is his "favourite." Gilroy notes that Franklin's ground squirrel were common on his farm, and he explains that on wetland habitats of the countryside, waterfowl use ponds maintained by beaver "that moved in." He mentions there are some 70 species of bird life nesting on this piece of land, but reserves specific mention for subsequent articles. In most of his writing, he portrays an anthropomorphic view of the natural world, conveyed with such sentiments as the early spring robins providing a "song to welcome a brand new day." But overall, it is light and enjoyable reading, and accomplishes what I imagine Gilroy probably intended with his newspaper column - to raise awareness and empathy for wildlife and the natural world.

I can recommend Doug Gilroy's book "Out and About" as a primer for young readers who may be developing an interest in natural history.

Reviewed by *Garry E. Hornbeck*, 312 Cedarille Crescent, SW, Calgary, AB T2W 2H7.



Of 77 Common Loons found dead in New England, more than half had died from lead poisoning, and half of these had eaten lead fishing sinkers.

Lead sinkers are banned in Great Britain and the Environmental Protection agency is investigating whether they should be banned in the United States.

A FIELD GUIDE TO EASTERN BUTTERFLIES

PAUL A. OPLER and VICHAI MALIKUL. 1998. Houghton Mifflin, Boston. 485 pp. \$29, soft cover. 113x184 mm. Peterson Field Guide Series. ISBN 0-395-90453-6

This is a pretty book. Except for two copyright dates, nothing is said about its being a revision of the 1992 version, presumably because changes largely involve the format. They start with the cover (the signature colours of part of the Peterson series are now brown and yellow instead of blue and white), followed by a more attractive layout, a new organization and 90 more numbered pages "glossy", rather than flat.

It does not appear that the text for species has been changed but the information is in one good-looking paragraph instead of 4 or 5 and the type is a little smaller, saving a few lines per species. Many of the English names have been changed to conform with the North American Butterfly Association's 1995 list.² Two recent titles have been added to the references, the list of butterfly houses has gone from four to eight (including the Metro Toronto Zoo), the number of butterfly organizations has been increased by two and several of the contacts for others have been updated.

In 1992, the plates divided the text in two. The new version has the plates in front. Plates 1-4 - from plants to pupae - and the 35 plates (14 - 48 in the original) of butterflies are still the same. However, the paintings are now sharper and brighter and, although the scales are the same, e.g., full size to half-size, the images are larger by about 10%.

While the colour is good in most cases, a major criticism is the emphasis

on yellow. This makes the ground colour of commas too bright. Uhler's Arctic is shown as yellow, rather than light brown. It may also account for some of the dark browns being lighter than natural, e.g., Northern Cloudywing.

Plate 9 has more than its share of errors. The first of four Orange Sulphur images is the (unlabelled) spring form; the other three labelled "Spring form" are actually the summer form. The Pink-edged Sulphur label should be centered under the first three images, instead of the first two. However, the names for Palaeno and Pelidne sulphurs have been reversed, correcting an earlier error.

Former plates 5 to 13 (photos of 68 species in natural habitats) have been replaced by 101 individual photos fitted into the species accounts. However, the organization would have been more user friendly if the publisher had not felt the need to slavishly follow the formula of photo-at-top and/or photo-at-bottom of a page. Some are within the illustrated species' text or immediately before or after. However, the majority are within other species' treatments either on the same page, a facing page or the next page over. The Hobomok Skipper photo is two pages from the species' account.

Perhaps the most attractive change is coloured maps - red for areas of residence, blue for regular migration areas and yellow (a poor choice) for stragglers. The maps do not appear to have been changed and, as in the

original, any map that includes the Arctic islands does not show province and state boundaries!

How to account for 90 more pages when dealing with the same number of species-- 524 -- and while saving space as noted above? Largely because the 39 plates and their facing legends now have page numbers, resulting in 78 "extra" pages. The remainder is because each of the 101 species photos, with several lines of text, occupies a third of a page.

The guide does not recognize recent research that changes the status of some species, e.g., splitting Common Branded Skipper into Common Branded and Plains, and the combining of *Titania* and Arctic fritillaries into Arctic.

This volume illustrates about 97% of Manitoba's butterflies, 85% of Saskatchewan's and 70% of Alberta's. However, for 100% coverage, better

identification aids and flight periods, more accurate and easily interpreted ranges (as well as additional information), the *Butterflies of Canada* is much better for the Prairies, even though its large format is a pain in the neck.¹ (A more detailed review of the 1992 Peterson appeared in the September 1994 *Blue Jay*. Vol. 52, No. 3).

1. LAYBERRY, ROSS, PETER HALL and DON LAFONTAINE. 1998. *The butterflies of Canada*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto. 280 pages + 32 plates. 223 x 280 mm. \$29.95, soft cover, ISBN 0-8020-7881-8.

2. NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION. 1995. *Checklist & English names of North American butterflies*. North American Butterfly Association, 4 Delaware Road, Morristown, NJ 07960. 43 pages. \$7 US (includes shipping).

Reviewed by *Bernie Gollop*, 2202 York Ave., Saskatoon, SK S7J 1J1



The greatest butterfly spectacles on earth, the winter aggregations of migratory Monarchs, stand in jeopardy from coastal development in California and logging in Mexico.

For butterflies that overwinter as adults, you may wish to try placing hibernation cells about. These could be coffee cans in the crook of a tree, half full of dry leaves and bark; empty birdhouses; or anything that successfully mimics a hollow tree with an inviting orifice and protective thermal insulation.

THE BUTTERFLIES OF CANADA

ROSS LAYBERRY, PETER HALL and DON LAFONTAINE. 1998. University of Toronto Press, Toronto. 280 pages + 32 plates. 225 x 280 mm. \$29.95, soft cover, ISBN 0-8020-7881-8.

This is a pretty, excellent book. It discusses, illustrates and maps every species in the Prairie Provinces (as well as those other parts of Canada -- 293 butterflies in total). The text for each occupies from half to a full page under the headings of Diagnosis, Subspecies, Range, Similar Species, Early Stages, Abundance, Flight Season, Habits and Remarks. What else is there?

Introductory and concluding sections treat the history of butterfly study in Canada, geography and changing distributions, migrants, observing, photography, gardening, conservation, taxonomy and life history. They also include a national checklist, collecting guidelines, glossary, bibliography and index to caterpillar food plants. Based on recent research, the English names are updated from the North American Butterfly Association's 1995 list.¹

One learns, for instance, that a sulphur, discovered in 1916 on a hill near Bernard Harbour on the Arctic coast was not seen again during many Arctic expeditions until 1988, when two scientists, studying the original explorer's diaries, located that hill and found a thriving colony still there - the only known site for Johansen's Sulphur. And that 33 species migrate to Canada either regularly, sometimes becoming common, or occasionally, as strays.

Colour photographs make up 20 plates of museum specimens, 2 of immature stages in the wild, and 10 devoted to different habitats. Identification plates show from 7 to 33 species - life size. Male and female,

upper and lower wing surfaces, when needed for identification, are presented in excellent colour. The legends are on facing pages with the images numbered. In Plate 2, the name "Colorado Skipper" is used instead of Western Branded Skipper, as in the text.

Each habitat plate illustrates eight typical butterflies in natural settings and two landscapes - a neat addition. However, there is no reference in the text to these plates, leaving readers to draw their own conclusions about them. The habitats vary from life zones, e.g., Boreal Forest, to Roadsides and Fields. Polixenes Arctic and Arctic Blue are each shown in two habitats - as different subspecies. One wonders about using Indra Swallowtail as typical of a habitat in which it occurs at only one mountain pass in Canada.

The maps are a particularly valuable contribution. They are based on 90,000 records in the Canadian National Insect Collection - 3,885 for Saskatchewan, including those from the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. Each record is a dot. Map scales vary with the distribution of species - from country-wide to regional.

What is the most widespread butterfly in Canada? Because there are no regional checklists, one is forced to study 293 maps to find that some 16 species occur in all provinces and territories. The most widespread? Probably a toss-up among Spring Azure, Silvery Blue, Mourning Cloak and Red-spotted Purple (including its subspecies, the White Admiral). The

most widespread north of 60° is Freija Fritillary.

Major errors for Saskatchewan are: the inclusion of Lorquin's Admiral (a discredited hypothetical); the omission of Western Tiger Swallowtail (Cypress Hills) and Indian Skipper (Somme) -- the latter discovered in the museum collection after the book had gone to press. At least four of the Summer Azure records south of Wildcat Hills and Candle Lake are actually late Spring Azures. For Rocky Mountain Parnassian and Juniper Hairstreak, the two dots close together should be only one - single provincial records. For the West Coast Lady, Indian Head is correct, Regina should be deleted and Cypress Hills added. Still to be inserted is the 26 July 1998 discovery by Ross Layberry of a new species for the province - a very ragged Regal Fritillary near Big Muddy - bringing the province's total to 157.

No publication will ever satisfy all the critics. My belligerent beef is that butterfly names and sexes are not printed by each image, as has been done for decades in all the Peterson field guides.

Then there is size - a considerable problem for those of us used to carrying small-format field guides for the last hundred years. To be readily available in the field, this one requires either a super-sized pocket, a backpack or (heaven forbid!) a colour-photocopy reduction of at least the plates to fit into a pocket-sized loose-leaf.

University of Toronto Press committed a major faux pas in producing the soft cover with a glued binding. As those who use the book a lot soon find out, the plates start shedding in a month or two. UTP has told me that anyone who bought this version can return it to their local dealer for a coil-bound replacement.

If you have only one butterfly book, this should be it.

1. North American Butterfly Association. 1995. Checklist & English names of North American butterflies. North American Butterfly Association, 4 Delaware Road, Morristown, NJ 07960.

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