

The butterflies and common moths of New Zealand.
D. E. Gaskin. Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., Wellington. \$4.75.

What is the best way of arranging for the review of a book of this kind? You cannot give it to one of those for whom it is intended because he would obviously be unable to test its accuracy, though he might have useful comments to make on its style and helpfulness. On the other hand, an expert is likely to be too pedantic and hard to please. An informed amateur would probably be best. Not being an expert and not knowing a suitable victim I decided to do the job myself.

The book is in three sections, the first of which is explanatory and deals with life history, external anatomy and classification and gives very useful advice on technique.

Section II is the main part and is the key to all our 18 butterflies but only to about 180 of the most abundant and conspicuous of our approximately 1,600 species of moths. Keys are confusing at any time (except to their begetters) and, in spite of Mr. Gaskin's care, this particular one is sure to give at least some trouble because of what it so justifiably leaves out. But the attempt has been worth making. Time and others will test it better than I.

Section III consists of descriptions, life histories and distributions of the approximately 200 species and seems to be accurate enough and to contain enough information for the target audience.

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The surprisingly tardy appearance of a journal printed under the imprimatur of our companion Society across the Tasman Sea is welcome. It is well-produced by the offset process which, whatever its advantages, must be an added trial to the Editor (currently I. C. R. Rowley), since no galleys are available for checking and the wax "masters", from which the journal is directly printed, have to be proof-read in Canberra.

As it is impracticable to adequately review each paper individually, a list of contents must suffice to give an idea of this new periodical's very considerable interest and value.

Volume 1: Society evolution, The evolution and adaptive significance of social behaviour, Evolution of sociality among animals, Quantitative methods in the study of processes in marine populations, Primitive forms of social

There are four colour plates (which depict all the butterflies, the convolvulus hawk moth, the gum emperor moth and "a collection of New Zealand lepidopterous pests"), 24 black and whites (which, according to a quick check, apparently illustrate all the moths described in the book) and a number of line drawings. In addition there is a systematic list of all the species concerned and an extensive list of references.

The colour plates are adequate, though the species are oddly arranged in them and unnumbered; but a considerable proportion of the black and whites would certainly not help *me* very much as they are apparently poorly reproduced.

Beginners may be confused because only the female *Danaus plexippus* is shown, yet the text does not say whether or not the sexes are coloured differently. Equally as confusing for the tyro is the appearance of "*Danaus melissa*" in the systematic list but not elsewhere.

The material in Section III is not the kind to encourage fine writing; even so, the style is unnecessarily flat: About 90% of the paragraphs begin dully with "the" or "this", the word "case" is (as in most technical writing) done to death, "localized" is misused (need the word be used at all?) and "copse", though useful, is hardly New Zealand usage.

Despite my reservations, Mr. Gaskin's book is sure to be useful. — G.R.W.

behaviour and their significance in the ecology of gregarious insects in biotic systems, The nature of the mixed community, Quantitative ecology and ecosystem dynamics, Man as a factor in the dynamics of plant communities, Population changes of the perennial tussock-grass *Danthonia caespitosa* in a semi-arid environment, The impact of soil nutrients on the evolution of plant form and their possible role in determining plant and animal communities.

Volume 2: The need for rangelands research in Australia, The use of radio telemetry in Australian biological research, A bibliography of radio telemetry in biological studies, The natural selection of self-regulatory behaviour in animal populations, Ecology and behaviour — a review of the ways in which Australian ecologists use behaviour in their studies, Sympatry in Australian ravens, Communication by smell in the wild rabbit, Ecological aspects of the behaviour of domestic animals, Ranging behaviour in sheep in large areas, The value of social status to cattle and pigs, Sub-grouping in sheep flocks, Australian ecological references 1966, List of members of the Ecological Society of Australia. — G.R.W.