

Book reviews

Tristan Lafranchis, translated by Albert Vliegenthart, Jaap Bouwman & Mathilde Groenendijk, 2009. **Dagvlinders van Europa, veldgids dagvlinders met determinatiesleutels** [originally *Papillons d'Europe*]. – KNNV publishers, ISBN 978 90 5011 302 1, softcover, 400 pp. Price € 39.95 (excl. p&t) www.knnvuitgeverij.nl

This is essentially the Dutch translation of the well known field guide by Tristan Lafranchis, earlier published in French and English. The present translation not only gives the original keys in Dutch, but also adds new appendices on the butterflies of the Macaronesian islands and Cyprus. For these islands photographs and short diagnoses are provided, plus a checklist, but no keys. This is a welcome addition for these popular islands.

The keys are easy to use, amply illustrated with photos of live specimens and details, and also with sketch maps of the distribution area. In general this will help to identify the majority of European butterflies, assuming one has been able to observe and/or photograph all the necessary details. On the basis of observations, identifications of several species groups in lycaenids, skippers, fritillaries or browns will still be a challenge. In the end of the book, the author provides some sketches of genitalia parts that ought to be visible with a hand lens in life specimens. I wonder, however, if someone not familiar with the morphology of these structures will be able to really correctly recognise the differences. These sketches certainly will be useful for those who have studied the genitalia of dead specimens before. The author is making a case (“a wish from the author”) for studying butterflies by photographs alone and avoid killing for collection purposes. Although I applaud the interest for live insects and increase of publication of photographs of life specimens, making a strong contradiction between the damage done by collecting versus photographing is in my opinion false. All activities to study insects damage the environment to some extent, and someone trampling the vegetation (including its invertebrates) for a unique shot may in fact do more damage than another person taking a specimen with a quick sweep of the net. In general entomologists contribute hardly to the damage of the environment by their field activities compared to the real damaging factors: urbanisation, deforestation, acidification and many other human activities. Every serious entomologist should contribute to his or her best abilities, whether by photographing

or collecting, and fight for the protection of nature rather than fighting each other. The author claims that we need especially research on habits and biology, but that is a personal view, and I would like to add that we still also need well collected specimens for studying relationships, morphology and geographic patterns (e.g. phylogeography). For DNA studies collections are now becoming increasingly important. For more considerations on this topic I refer to the earlier review of the English edition by Tarmann (2009, *Nota Lepidopterologica* 32: 11), whose opinions I share.

The translators did a good job; furthermore they wanted to bring the nomenclature up-to-date and in line with modern checklists as *Fauna Europaea*. Unfortunately the author did not agree to that, so that the nomenclature used (as in the other editions) deviates from that in several other recent texts. Luckily, a list of names proposed for *Fauna Europaea* is added by the translators. Unfortunately the book was just a bit too early, and a few of these names have been changed before the latest version of this database (2.1) went online, see www.faunaeur.org for the latest nomenclature.

One point that I cannot find useful is inventing Dutch vernacular names for all European butterflies that do not occur in The Netherlands or Belgium. In fact the index for hostplants only uses the Dutch names, making it almost useless for experienced readers, who know the scientific names, but never have heard the Dutch names before. Butterfly enthusiasts should be able to communicate with those from other countries, and for these one definitely needs the scientific names. The book is an essential tool for all butterfly students and the Dutch edition is a welcome addition for the Dutch language community.

Erik J. van Nieukerken

Annette van Berkel, 2009. **Dagvlinders in Nederland en Vlaanderen** [Butterflies in the Netherlands and Flanders]. – DVD. KNNV publishers, ISBN 978 90 5011 315 1, in case. Price € 14.95 (excl. p&t) www.knnvuitgeverij.nl

All entomologists know that the way the insects they study move about, and their habits are almost as characteristic as the morphological characters.

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Still, such characters are rarely described in detail, because of the difficulty describing them exactly. Videos are the ideal means to show moving insects in their habitat, but currently very few videos or DVD's with details of all species in a group of insects are on the market. Most active insects are hidden in general nature movies, or in films such as the famous "Life in the Undergrowth" by David Attenborough. Systematic treatments are almost only published now for birds.

Annette van Berkel's DVD on the butterflies of the Netherlands and Flanders is one of the first video guides for an insect group, following that on dragonflies by the same publishers. The DVD shows three types of videos: two on behaviour in general: the secret life of the butterfly and the orange-tip, four on habitats, and one each for all the species in the treated area. The habitat and behaviour movies can be seen with or without Dutch spoken commentary, those without still have the nature sounds, making it very attractive with all the bird and grasshopper songs, but also traffic sounds. The species videos do not have commentary.

These movies show some unique material, for instance of *Phengaris (Maculinea)* species, showing the life history with caterpillars in ant nests. Also for many other species various parts of the life history are shown, including courtship, mating, oviposition and larval habits. The search of hibernating eggs of *Satyrrium w-album* on *Ulmus* buds in the canopy with a lifting ramp is another spectacular shot.

In general the quality of the movie material is good and very natural, with agreeable sounds of the surroundings. The habitat movies provide a realistic picture of the habitat of the lowlands and often localities can be recognized. Although the film quality is far from that in Attenborough style movies, the composition and taxonomic organisation make it a unique and very useful document, also for non Dutch speakers. The species shots are usually different from those of the same species in the habitat videos.

Not all videos were taken in the Netherlands or Belgium, e.g. the life history shots of *Phengaris* species were taken by the Polish Marcin Sieleszniew and Anna M. Stankiewicz-Fiedurek. It would have been nice if some detail on the localities had been provided, but that is a minor criticism. The spoken commentary by Eva Zeijlstra is not too pleasant, it sounds halting, without much empathy for the



subject. Commentary by the famous Dutch ballad singer Boudewijn de Groot sounds much more natural and pleasant.

This DVD is warmly recommended for all those interested in butterflies, and with this low price very affordable.

Erik J. van Nieukerken

Voor wie Nederland en Vlaanderen wil leren kennen. By J. Wilmots and J. De Rooij, 1978, Hasselt/Diepenbeek. (Dutch).
Handgeschreven wereld. Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de middeleeuwen. By D. Hogenelst and Frits van Oostrom, 1995, Amsterdam. (Dutch).
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Red List methodology butterflies Flanders the Netherlands. This is a preview of subscription content, log in to check access. Preview.
Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Visserij (1990) Beschermingsplan Dagvlinders. Amsterdam: Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Visserij. Google Scholar. Odá©, B. (in press) Bedreigde en kwetsbare sprinkhanen en krekels in Nederland. Voorstel voor een Rode Lijst (basisrapport). Nederlandse Faunistische Mededelingen. Google Scholar.