Badon, Jade Aster T. 2014. Butterflies of the Philippines. Mariposa Press Book, The Florida Biodiversity Foundation, Gainesville, Florida. 110 pp.

■ www.floridabiodiversityfoundation.com, price unknown (contact jaabadon@gmail.com)

The renowned biodiversity of the Philippines is the envy of many countries around the world and much has been written about this rich biodiversity through these years. However, more attention has been given to the study and conservation of higher forms of animals such as fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. Therefore, any publication on insects, especially on the beautiful butterflies, is most welcome and highly appreciated. This book under review is a good attempt to publish about such lesser known animals in the country, in particular, butterflies.

This compact volume is basically a taxonomic listing of some Philippine butterflies. One hundred twenty-five species are listed, representing five families of butterflies primarily found in Negros Oriental, in the central portion of the country. The families covered are the Papilionidae (swallowtails and birdwings), Pieridae (whites and sulfurs), Nymphalidae (brushfooted), Lycaenidae (harvesters, hairstreaks and blues) and Hesperiidae (skippers). The diversity of butterflies as illustrated in this book is indeed high and this makes them one of the top priority areas for conservation in the Philippines, a theme that resonates many times in the pages of this book.

The book opens with an introductory section introducing the Philippines, including a brief account of its geological history that has bearings on the biogeography of these islands. The island features of Negros are highlighted by colorful photos with notes on its forests and the impact of humans on the various habitats and the butterfly fauna there, most likely derived from the author's M.Sc. thesis that was submitted to the University of Florida.

Species treatments are classified under the five families listed above, which are further subdivided into various subfamilies and tribes. There is a dearth of actual species descriptions and measurements which is offset by colorful photos of specimens of male and female specimens (if available) and showing both ventral and dorsal views. Under each species are notes on Negros distribution as well as information on Philippine distributions. At the end of the book is a short bibliography as well as a short bio sketch of the author.

Aside from the numerous publications done by pioneers such as Colin G. Treadaway and Julian N. Jumalon, this book is probably the latest serious attempt to document the butterfly fauna undertaken by a Filipino. However, a field survey of only four months is too short even for one province which may not account for different species occurring in different seasons. A year or two of exhaustive exploration with a week-long stay in selected rich habitats throughout the island of Negros as well as in neighboring islands will be a good follow-up study for succeeding publications. Indeed, this book needs a good follow-up study with more information, better quality of specimens and pictures. The statement that "the specimens (in the plates) were mostly collected in Negros Island but they have wide ranges so they occurred in other islands or throughout the Philippines" is true. Of course these excluded the endemic ones. Not only are many species found in other islands in the country but also in our neighboring countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and some species even in the northern parts of Australia. Lastly, the current title of the book "Butterflies of the Philippines" is quite misleading and should be revised in future editions. A better title would have been more restricted to the province of Negros Oriental.

The author who is currently pursuing his postgraduate studies in systematic entomology should be warmly congratulated and further encouraged to carry on with his fine work. It is very reassuring to note that someone like him should take up the challenge to study the taxonomy of butterflies in this era of high technology when basic sciences like systematics and taxonomy are relegated to the backburners. The different funding agencies should lend their support to unsung heroes and biologists who work patiently to further document and understand the rich biodiversity of the Philippines, and indeed of our entire planet.

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