

Book Review

***A Naturalist's Guide to the Butterflies of Britain and Northern Europe* by Ted Benton**

John Beaufoy Publishing Ltd. Oxford, England 2017. 176 pages. 300 photographs.
£11.99

This compact and attractive little book covers all 158 resident or regular migrant species of butterflies that occur in northern Europe (defined here as Britain, Ireland, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia).

It is published by the same company as the excellent recent books on *Butterflies of India* and *Butterflies of Peninsula Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand* and is the same size and format (180mm x 127mm), although the cover layout design is slightly different.

It is packed with a wonderful collection of high-quality photographs of the adult butterflies, showing upperwing and underwing of virtually every species and often male and female where these differ in overall appearance. Combined with a refreshingly new and original text, it forms an excellent identification aid. Unlike so many other European butterfly guides, it does actually try to point out the key features to look out for in each species! The majority of species are each given a full page, allowing room for several good-sized photos and within the text for a reasonably fulsome description of the adult butterfly, the species distribution in northern Europe and its habitat and habits. Prior to the individual species accounts, a succinct but interesting 20 page section at the beginning of the book discusses butterfly biology, ecology, distribution and conservation.

It says much for Ted Benton's dedication to travel over 35 years and for the diligence with which he has worked to prepare this book in that virtually all the photographs (all but 6) are his own and they are all of a consistently high quality. The design and printing (in India and Malaysia respectively) appear to have done full justice to these photographs in ensuring faithful colour reproduction.

As a reference guide, this is well worth adding to any shelf of European butterfly books and like all the "Naturalist's Guide" series is very reasonably priced. However, it is also small and thus light enough to consider adding it to one's luggage when in search of butterflies in these northern European countries. As well as the stated focus countries, it also covers the majority of species present in northern parts of Germany, France and Poland.

Prolific in his entomological writings, Ted Benton will already be well-known to many as the author of two wonderful New Naturalist volumes on *Bumblebees* and *Grasshoppers and Crickets* and also *The Easy Butterfly Guide* and *Butterflies of Colchester and North East Essex*. He has also just published a new Naturalist's Handbook to *Solitary Bees*. How he finds time to be Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Essex University is a complete mystery!

Review by Martin Davies