

Review: Dunn, K.L. & Dunn, L.E. (2006). *Review of Australian butterflies – 1991: Annotated version. (CD-ROM)*. Melbourne, Australia: Published by the authors. AUS \$45 (\$35 US). (Available from www.calodema.com)

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For at least 8 months, I have been advertising the Dunn's CD Rom on Australian butterflies at my website: www.calodema.com. I have now decided to write a short review of this CD so that butterfly enthusiasts and other viewers on the website may know something more about this incredible production.

As an amateur work, it is huge and an industrious effort! The CD Rom comprises over 900 pages (total pages I-XII and 1-898) and the total number of figures and tables provided is a staggering 964. For those who may not know about the authors, there is a brief outline on them on p. 775. It is not a 'coffee table' book though: butterfly photographs have not been included, except for a couple of key specimens provided as annotations. Therefore, the CD should be used in conjunction with other books and publications on Australian butterflies when identifications are required to be undertaken. It presents the 1991 text in black font with new annotative sections in colour. This enables clear distinction of the two texts for citation purposes. The reference sections of the original four parts of Dunn & Dunn (1991) have been amalgamated to serve as a functional tool, appropriate to its now single-volume format. The new CD format closes with the 'Annotations' sections (p. 803 onwards) and their separate references.

The CD-Rom required manual loading on my Mac computer by copying the files and clicking on the PDF file to load it. This can be done using a directory program like "Windows Explorer". But, it will autostart on IBMs, using operating systems such as 98, ME and XP. It needs 'Acrobat Reader' to open the PDF file (about 55 mb); the reader version will depend on the operating system in use. The authors have advised that the program will run best with a screen resolution of 1024 x 768 or better, and that LCD screens should be run at their native resolution. As well as the PDF file comprising the work, the original figures are enclosed in separate directories should one need these for other purposes such as replication in one's publications. These originals are of a better quality than those in PDF format. Purchasers should also be aware that the files on the inkjet printed CD have been burned rather than commercially pressed. This format is less durable, so they should not be exposed to high temperatures as might occur if left in direct sunshine.

It should be stressed that the digital edition is not a revision of the Australian butterfly fauna. It is in fact, a repaginated version of the original *Review of Australian Butterflies* (1991), and incorporates the whole of the 1991 text and all charts and figures in the original set. The CD though is now embellished with annotations. This new section is extensive, involving some 40,000 words. Annotations in red font in the CD Rom signify errors which have been detected in Dunn & Dunn (1991) and those in blue provide extra information on various topics or aspects. They expand on content matters, including contemporary and historic information on butterfly species where relevant. They also provide background information on the methodology, the project's history, and discuss published and unpublished feed back on the project contributed by various authorities. Just reading the 'Annotations on taxa' (Amalgamated checklist) makes any casual naturalist to feel like a 'butterfly expert', without having had to plod through piles of

scientific reports and books to find out what's new in the field. The rest of the book will take a bit longer to read though - the total CD version comprises some 230,000 words!. It is a credit to the Dunns that despite it now being over 15 years since their volumes were released, that they have elicited very few negative responses or major error exposures. (The presence of errors is no discredit! As an author of books and hundreds of papers, myself, I know that it is difficult to write a flawless work, especially one of this magnitude!).

In fact, the Dunn & Dunn (1991) species atlas set represented a landmark publication at that time in the study of Australian and world butterflies. Its large point-plotted maps of Australia including Tasmania were the first available for a continent in lepidopterology. A second noteworthy contribution of the Dunn & Dunn (1991) volumes were the adult temporal charts. These were computer-generated for 33 phytogeographic grid-determined regions and six natural zones within Australia, based on the framework proposed by the well-known CSIRO botanist, Dr B.A. Barlow. The same system was used in the well known, *Flora of Australia* series, but Dunns' have shown its application in entomology as well. I think this was a good choice, after all, the majority of butterflies are reliant on particular plants for their survival, and so their distributions link closely to their few or many larval hosts.

The phenograms added significantly to regional and seasonal knowledge of the Australian butterfly fauna, serving as a foundation for future work. As mentioned before, the Dunn & Dunn (1991) volumes were originally intended as an information source to supplement contemporary butterfly texts which utilise range-fill maps. Indeed, the usefulness of Dunn & Dunn (1991) to the study of Australian entomology has earned this work a place in the CSIRO book chapter by Moulds (1999). The maps within Dunn & Dunn (1991) formed the basis of the somewhat conservative, low resolution distribution maps provided by Braby (2000, 2004) and Common and Waterhouse (1972, 1981).

In concluding, the Dunn and Dunn (1991) volumes are now well known amongst entomologists and have been regularly cited in international publications, as well as within Australia, over the years. Even as I write this review, I see that several contemporary papers on butterfly distribution still cite the original work. Thus, as baseline primary quantitative data, the value of Dunn & Dunn (1991) to be available as a CD-Rom version to users of computer-sourced information should be self-evident. The CD Rom is recommended for all those interested in Lepidoptera, not just those from the Australian region, and at \$35 US, the CD is a bargain!

References

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