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Book Review

Rákosy L. 2024. A field guide to the butterflies of Romania.

Vlad Dincă

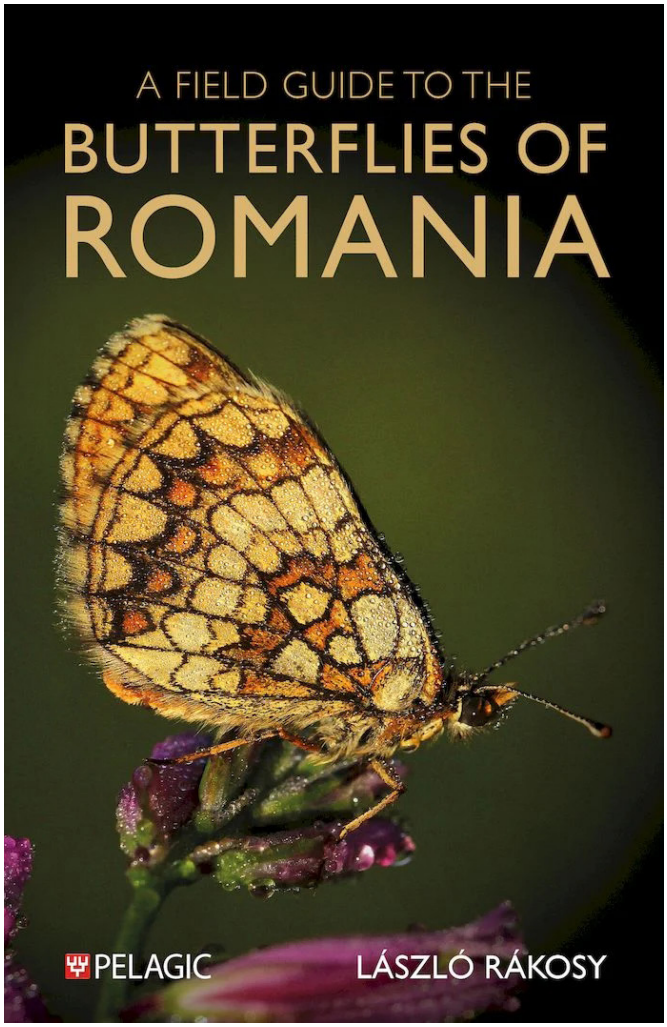
Following the successful Romanian edition published in 2013, the current book represents a very welcome updated English version dealing with all (over 200) species of butterflies (Papilionoidea) reported from Romania.

The introduction, preceded by a foreword by King Charles III, addresses in a succinct, but informative manner aspects regarding the morphology, identification, life cycle, habitats, monitoring, research and conservation of butterflies. Special attention is paid to the presentation of important butterfly habitats and sites in Romania.

The systematic part presents each species of Romanian butterfly according to the following algorithm: description (also including, where necessary, information on how to distinguish similar species), habitat, biology, protection and conservation, general distribution and distribution in Romania. Each species is treated on one page, approximately half of it consisting of text, while the other half includes images of butterflies in nature and a small map of Romania depicting the general distribution of extant, as well as extinct populations. Certain species are allocated more space, separate information being provided for various subspecies (e.g. *Parnassius apollo, Pseudophilotes bavius, Erebia melas* etc.).

The images of butterflies, of very good quality, usually number between two and four and aim to capture, depending on case, sexual dimorphism, dorsal and ventral morphology, or seasonal variation. Photos of preimaginal stages are sometimes included as well. Phenological diagrams for all life stages are also included, providing information in a concise, practical manner.

The final part of the book includes colour plates of prepared collection specimens (males and females, dorsal and ventral) of all Romanian butterfly species. Very welcome is the indication on some images of characters that facilitate identification between morphologically similar species. The colour plates are followed by line drawings of male genitalia for several species known for their very similar external morphology.



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Several pages are also dedicated to taxonomic notes (e.g. on subspecies, nomenclatural aspects etc.), followed by a glossary and a comprehensive list of references.

This book currently represents the most complete and up to date overview of Romanian butterflies, in-

cluding valuable information written in a concise, clear manner, and accompanied by good quality illustrations. Encapsulating the vast experience of the author, this work represents a valuable source of information not only for Romanian and European lepidopterists, but also for those involved in nature conservation and management, as well as anybody passionate about insects and biodiversity in general.

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