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Review: *Britain's day-flying Moths* by David Newland, Robert Still and Andy Smith

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Britain's Day-flying Moths, a field guide to the day-flying moths of Britain and Ireland
David Newland, Robert Still and Andy Smith, 2013.
Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey
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This very attractive field guide belongs to a series that is winning widespread and justified praise for layout, design and overall quality. It covers the 133 'macro-moths' that fly, or are readily disturbed, by day in the British Isles. It also includes a small selection (22 species) of the numerous day-flying 'micro-moths'. First impressions are excellent: as with others in the series, the book is beautifully designed for field use, compact, and comes with a transparent plastic cover to protect it from the elements. Other welcome 'field' features are the life-size photographs of selected species inside the back cover, together with a ruler along the edge of that page. The main species accounts that make up the bulk of the book devote a page to each species and are illustrated by photographs of live moths in their natural habitats. The photographs are almost universally of very fine quality.

The introductory sections are far more extensive than might be expected in a standard field-guide and are written in a clear, accessible style. They cover topics such as biology (including anatomy), naming and identifying moths, habitats, and gardening for moths; a useful glossary of terms is included on pp. 24–25. An illustrated table (pp. 14–15) gives a guide to distinguishing features for the main day-flying groups, and there is even (p. 22) a very welcome table of food-plants for garden moths. The closing sections of the book add extensive information about conservation, legislation, recording and monitoring, and there is also a useful 'Further Reading' section for those who wish to delve into the remainder of the British moth fauna.

The main species accounts in the core of the book are models of their kind: a table in the top right corner of the page summarises status, habitat, flight time, forewing length, host-plants and similar species, while the main text describes the habits and life history in more detail. (All of this information is handily summarised once more in table form on pp. 202–209.) A photograph of each species appears at the bottom of the page; the magnification is given in the top left corner. There are additional photographs of some species in the double page spread that introduces each family.

Criticisms are few and minor. Just two species photographs seem slightly unsatisfactory: the Raspberry Clearwing (*Pennisetia hylaeiformis*) on p. 44 is rather blurred and the Small White Wave (*Asthena albulata*, p. 107) is represented by a worn specimen that has lost its fringes. Only by comparison with the very crisp images of other species do these two stand out: in neither case is identification of the species likely to be compromised. One or two terms in the glossary are defined oddly or misleadingly: for example opposite 'scarce' we find 'the description of a species' abundance', but we are not told what the word says about that abundance. More seriously, 'form' is said to be an 'alternative term used for race or subspecies'; the explanation of these terms on p. 11, which is more correct, contradicts this. The authors once or twice misleadingly imply (e.g. in the introduction to micro-moths on p. 176) that moths with reduced mouthparts are therefore considered more 'primitive': rather, such reduction is a derived feature and some of the most primitive moths have very well developed mouthparts. The

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