

***Southern African Moths and their Caterpillars* by Hermann Staude, Mike Picker and Charles Griffiths**

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This long-awaited guide to an important and ubiquitous faunal group will not only be a valuable reference for serious lepidopterists, but also a valuable tool to enable the ever-growing band of citizen scientists and conservationists to become more familiar with their subjects. It is written for the most part in plain language, whilst also exposing the reader to terms used by experts to describe moths and their caterpillars, thus also having an educational purpose. The adult photographs are of moths in the wild, in contrast to earlier publications, which were of museum specimens.

The book draws not only upon the expertise accumulated by many generations of South African professional and amateur lepidopterists (e.g., Janse 1930–1964; Pinhey 1975; Oberprieler 1995; Kroon 1999; Krüger 2020) but also very importantly on the efforts of the Caterpillar Rearing Group of the Lepidopterists' Society of Africa. This project was originated by the principal author and his late colleague Douglas Kroon. They challenged contributors to find and rear caterpillars, to establish new host plant and parasitoid associations, and in some cases discover species unknown to science (Staude et al. 2016; Staude et al. 2020). Consequently, a large proportion of the caterpillars in this current publication are described and illustrated.

The book is attractively and logically laid out, organised into families and genera. Descriptions and identification features of moths and their caterpillars for each species are given with photographs, distribution maps and emergence times. Comments on the ecological or economic importance of moths and their caterpillars are given wherever appropriate. Photographers are credited in a table at the rear end of the book.

This book is an essential addition to any nature lover's library and opens a window to the fascinating world of nocturnal and diurnal moths and their very striking caterpillars. It is also of great value to more serious scientists because it presents an up-to-date summary of the current knowledge of the commoner moth species in southern Africa including life histories and distribution.

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