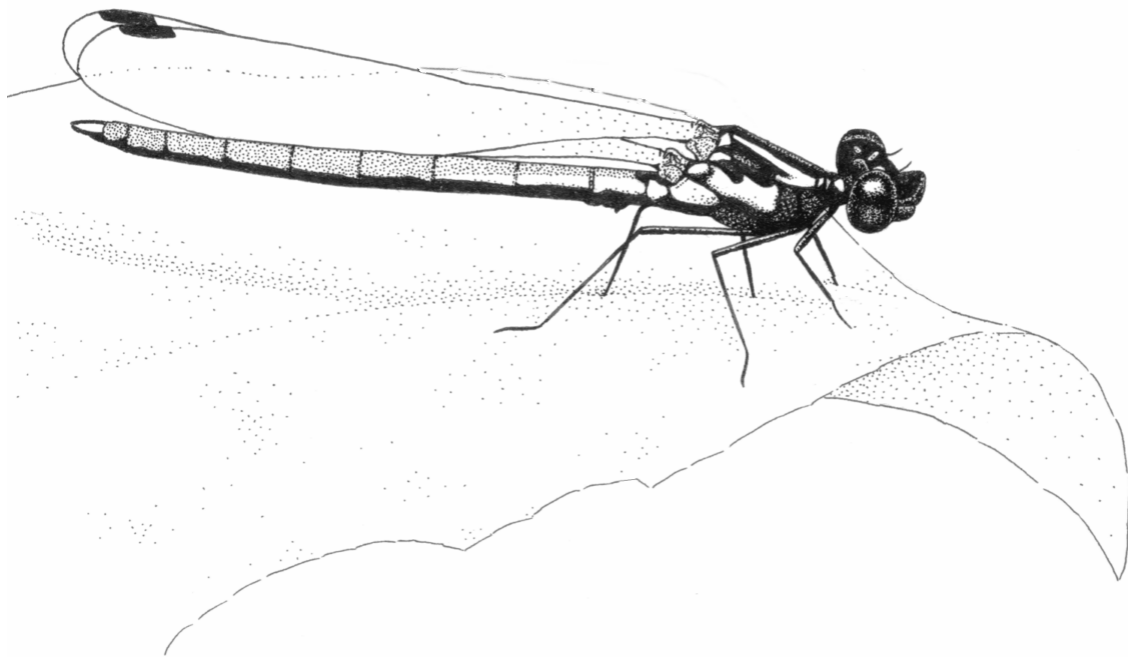


ISSN 0012-8317

Journal of East African Natural History

Volume 110 Part 2

2021



A Journal of Biodiversity

Journal of East African Natural History

A Journal of Biodiversity

Editor-in-chief

Benny Bytebier

University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Editors

Charles Warui

Nature Kenya, Kenya &
Murang'a University of Technology, Kenya

Geoffrey Mwachala

National Museums of Kenya, Kenya

Editorial Committee

Thomas Butynski

Eastern Africa Primate Diversity and Conversation
Program, Kenya and Lolldaiga Hills Research
Programme, Kenya

Norbert Cordeiro

Roosevelt University & The Field Museum, USA

Yvonne de Jong

Eastern Africa Primate Diversity and Conversation
Program, Kenya

Marc De Meyer

Royal Museum for Central Africa, Belgium

Ian Gordon

University of Rwanda, Rwanda

James Kalema

Makerere University, Uganda

Quentin Luke

East African Herbarium, Kenya

Muthama Muasya

Universtiy of Cape Town, South Africa

Deborah Manzollilo Nightingale

Nature Kenya, Kenya

Henry Ndangalasi

University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Darcy Ogada

The Peregrine Fund, Kenya

Francesco Rovero

University of Florence, Italy

Stephen Spawls

Independent, United Kingdom

Patrick Van Damme

Czech University of Life Sciences, Czech
Republic

Martin Walsh

Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and
Technology, Tanzania

Paul Webala

Maasai Mara University, Kenya

Production: Lorna A. Depew

Published: 31 January 2022

Front cover: Chlorocypha tenuis, a species of damselfly found in Kakamega Forest. Drawing by K.-D. B. Dijkstra.



NatureKenya

THE EAST AFRICA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



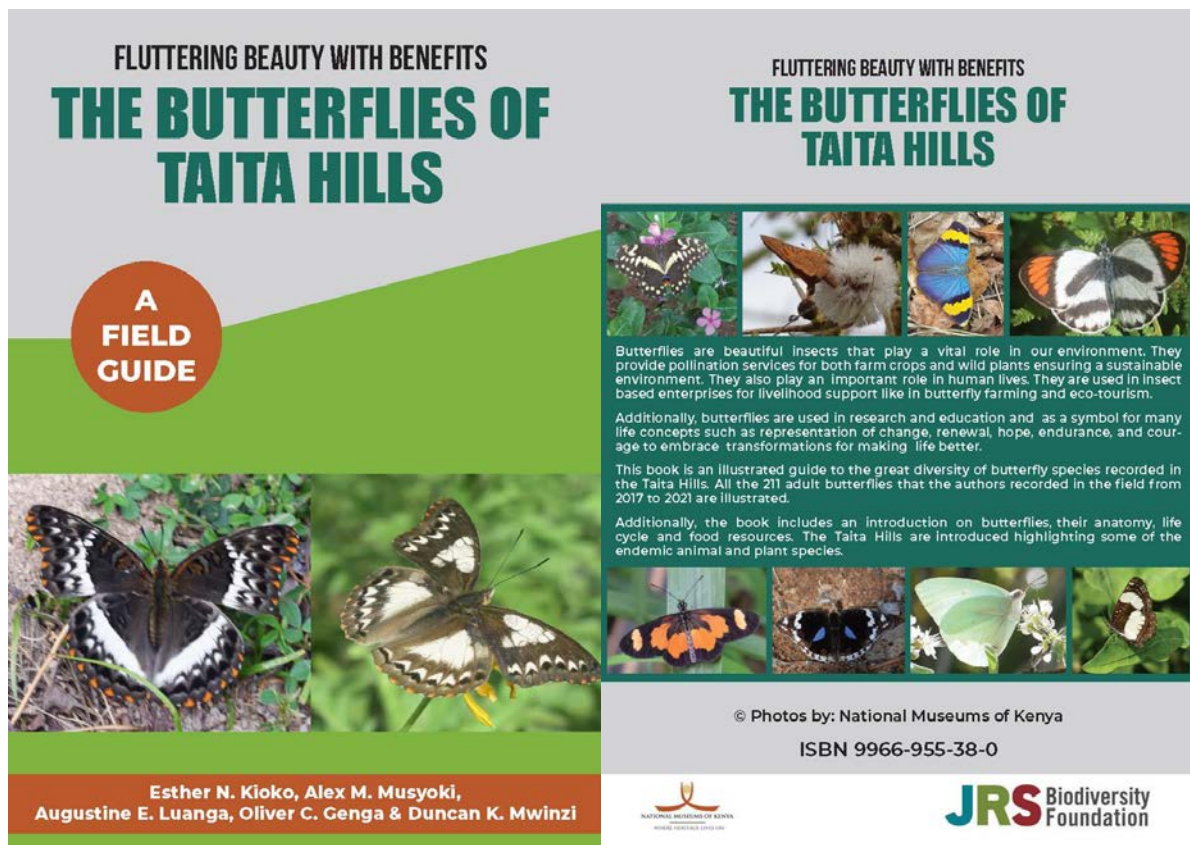
NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA

WHERE HERITAGE LIVES ON

BOOK REVIEW

Fluttering Beauty with Benefits: The Butterflies of the Taita Hills. A Field Guide.

By Esther N. Kioko, Alex M. Musyoki, Augustine, E. Luanga, Oliver C. Genga & Duncan K. Mwinzi. Published by National Museums of Kenya, 2021. Pp. 142, illustrated. ISBN 9966-955-38-0. Limited hard copies; pdf available from lead author Dr. E. Kioko (ekioko@yahoo.com).



This pretty little book, which is lavishly illustrated, is very pleasing to the eye and will serve as a field guide to the uninitiated. It will be useful to the butterfly breeding community in the Taita Hills and for ecotourism in the region. The layout is well planned and starts with an introduction to butterfly anatomy, life cycle and food. This is followed by a short introduction to the Taita Hills (but lacking a map) and some aspects of butterfly endemism, importance and conservation. The bulk of the book is formed by an enumeration of the families and species occurring in Taita Hills. The book ends with a glossary, bibliography, and an index to scientific and common names.

Unfortunately, this guide can only be described as a work in progress as it has several shortcomings.

Perhaps the biggest omission is that Mbololo, which is by far the largest, best preserved forest patch of the Taita Hills and certainly has species that have not been recorded elsewhere in Taita Hills, is not included in the field guide. It is indeed a pity that a Taita Hills pre-checklist was not assembled based on Torben Larsen's book "The Butterflies of Kenya and their Natural History" (1991 hardback, with revised softback published in 1996). This could have formed the basic checklist to which the research findings from the period 2017 – 2021 could have been added. A first glance suggests some 15-20 species missing.

Butterfly endemism to Taita Hills is listed as three endemics, one species and two subspecies, whereas in fact there are six endemics (seven if Mount Kasigau is included as the Kasigau and Taita populations are subspecifically different for one species).

The information on the "Taita Hills butterfly families and species details" takes up the bulk of the field guide *i.e.* 113 pages (pp 13-126). Regretfully, it contains many errors. I have marked up to 55 pages with corrections or with species identification errors. Pictures for the illustrated species were taken from the NMK collection, which is great if identification is correct initially, but this is unfortunately not always the case. Furthermore,

changes to the nomenclature have accumulated since Torben Larsen's published "The Butterflies of Kenya and their Natural History". Whereas, some attempts have been made to revise the names, not all of them have been updated, despite the fact these are available online from the Lepidopterists Society of Africa. The notes currently lean heavily on Larsen's book and would have been more useful if they were adapted to the particular Taita Hills situation. The checklist of five localities at the end of the guide is very useful but must include Mbololo in future rather than Modangache, the latter which is a very small forest remnant.

It seems to me that this field guide would have benefitted enormously from peer reviewing and a good editor. Clearly a second edition will be needed where these errors can be rectified, and the lacunae of Mbololo data can be added. A few blank pages for field notes at the end would be an added benefit. Despite these criticisms, its online publication is a welcome development; accessible site-focussed field guides on well known taxa have a valuable role to play in educating the general public and in raising local community awareness on Kenya's biodiversity.

Steve Collins