

A Field Guide to Insects of the Pacific Northwest

By Robert Cannings. 2018. Harbour Publishing. 7.95 CAD, Pamphlet.

This field guide is a handy little pamphlet that interested naturalists can easily bring anywhere with them to help identify common insects around the Pacific Northwest. The field guide starts with a small amount of information about what an insect is, how insects grow, and why insects are important. It has attractive macro photos of 55 species (although the publisher's website [Harbour Publishing 2018] says there are more than 60) organized in 19 taxonomic orders. A very short description of the species (or sometimes, of the order) next to each image provides a bit of background about the species. Its glossy, laminated finish would stand up to some light precipitation, but would not last in any significant rain. This field guide is clearly targeted towards amateur naturalists interested in learning some of the basics about insect ecology and identification in the Pacific Northwest and, from that perspective, it is excellent.

The author, Dr. Robert Cannings, is Curator Emeritus of Entomology at the Royal British Columbia Museum, where he has been studying insects since 1980. His main interests are in dragonflies and robber flies; he wrote the handbook to dragonflies of British Columbia (Cannings and Stuart 1977).

Given its target audience, this is not an exhaustive field guide. It lists between one and nine species for each taxonomic order; five taxonomic orders with rare or hard to see species were not included. According to the publisher's website, the species that were chosen are common but not familiar, the goal being to introduce amateur naturalists to the diversity of insects within the region. From this perspective, the author did an excel-

lent job choosing insects, focussing on interesting native species that an amateur naturalist is likely to come across if they were actively looking for insects. For example, within the Order Hymenoptera (Sawflies, Wasps, Bees, and Ants), the guide lists the Western Bumble Bee (*Bombus occidentalis*) and Blue Orchard Bee (*Osmia lignaria*), but not the Western Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*), even though most members of the public would think of a honey bee when they think about bees. The guide focusses on the wonderful native bees of the region rather than listing the well known, yet introduced, Western Honey Bee.

While this guide is an excellent introduction to the diversity of insects in the Pacific Northwest, it does not contain the information that is typically expected from a field guide. Nonetheless, it is a good resource for amateur naturalists interested in learning about the insects in this region.

Literature Cited

- Cannings, R.A., and K.M. Stuart.** 1977. The Dragonflies of British Columbia. British Columbia Provincial Museum Handbook N. 35. British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.
- Harbour Publishing.** 2018. A Field Guide to Insects of the Pacific Northwest. Accessed 22 June 2018. <http://harbourpublishing.com/title/AFieldGuidetotheInsectsofthePacificNorthwest#>.

WILLIAM D. HALLIDAY

Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, Whitehorse, YT, and
Department of Biology, University of Victoria, Victoria,
BC, Canada