



Butterflies Up Close - A Guide to Butterfly Photography

Roger Rittmaster. 2013.

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Paperback. 68 pp. \$26.96.

Review by Rob Santry

Butterflies Up Close - A Guide to Butterfly Photography (BUC) is a book that photographers and butterflyers of all skill levels will find very useful. The purpose of the book is to “provide tips for finding and capturing” the photographic beauty of butterflies. Of course, that can sometimes be easier said than done and BUC has some very helpful tips. The author, Roger Rittmaster, has spent many years in the field photographing butterflies and shares useful techniques on finding, approaching, and photographing butterflies. The book also covers aspects of photographic composition, cropping techniques, and how one can make simple changes to an image that will greatly enhance the final product.

The book is formatted as an 8 1/2” x 11” paperback and contains 89 color illustrations and three diagrams. This is an attractive book.

There is one important caveat in the book. Beginning photography topics are not covered. The author assumes the reader is already familiar with f-stop, aperture, ISO and other camera features. Actually, not delving into camera basics allows the author to gently push the reader into one of the most useful tools in a modern camera,

which is the exposure priority modes such as aperture priority. The camera’s computer will then calculate the exposure.

Section I contains subjects such as the natural history of butterflies, how to find butterflies, attracting butterflies, and other topics that will definitely help the beginner. The pictures in this section of the book are stunning. I especially like the fact that the author includes the camera settings he used for many of the photographs.

Section II covers photographic equipment. The author goes into great detail discussing “Point & Shoot” digital cameras and Digital SLR’s (Single Lens Reflex) cameras. There is a lot of information about the pros and cons of each type of digital camera. There is a great discussion that covers the topic of using an external flash when photographing butterflies.

Section III of discusses the actual process of taking butterfly photographs. There is a lot of important instruction provided and even experienced butterfly photographers can find a few tips here. The picture-taking tips alone are worth the price of the book. Included in this section is a how-to discussion on how to photograph a butterfly in-flight, accompanied with a few awesome photographs and the camera settings used. The final section covers photographic composition, which is an area that any photographer can overlook. After reading this section, I’ll bet you won’t center your butterfly in the picture. I know I won’t!

In conclusion, I think this book is informative and beautifully illustrated. It is well worth owning. 