

Announcement: Holarctic Lepidopterists Union

Madrid: May 24, 1983. During the course of a pleasant dinner at Horno Santa Theresa a proposal was made to form the Holarctic Lepidopterists Union. Present at this initial informal meeting were M. Gomez Bustillo, Paul R. Ehrlich, Rudi H. T. Mattoni and Dennis D. Murphy. Dr. Gomez Bustillo was unanimously selected as Chairman of the ad hoc union. It was agreed this evening that communication among Lepidopterists is in an abysmal state due to two reinforcing factors—1) the lack of exchange between European and American workers and 2) the recent appalling instability of butterfly nomenclature which is occurring in both the Palearctic and Nearctic regions.

The major long term objective of the union will be the development of a catalog/checklist of the Holarctic butterfly fauna with distribution data. Furthermore, the union will urge the application of a conservative nomenclature and restraint in creating new entities in the region until there is better understanding of relationships among extant taxa. Increased communication among all workers concerned with the region will be emphasized, and a consensus sought among participants through debate and consideration. A list of initial participants is in preparation, however, the union will be open to all interested parties. Communication will be mediated through a newsletter of this journal, including announcement of specialist listings and presentation of provisional checklists of specific groups as these are developed.

A first priority will be establishment of a tentative list of specialists and agreement on the defined boundaries of the holarctic. Emphasis will be on the truly holarctic derived fauna and not an exact geographic border. Obviously, no exact border definition can be completely satisfactory as broad transitions are found both in Mexico and Asia. The fauna of the border areas may be treated in addenda, as the relationships and interdigitation of groups at these borders is particularly fascinating; e.g. see *Butterflies of Oman* by Torben Larsen which describes the fauna of an area with intermixed Holarctic, Ethiopian, and Oriental faunal elements.

Since the increasing interest in butterflies as organisms for use in investigations of general principals of biology has coincided with a time of particularly poor communication among systematics workers and an attendant nomenclatural disarray, the objectives of this union are timely. Appearance of provisional lists should illuminate systematic deficiencies as well as agreements and disagreements in our view of the relationships among these organisms. Although efforts of the union may proceed slowly, a start is needed.