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Introducing the Dragonflies of British Columbia and the Yukon by Robert A. Cannings

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BOOK REVIEW

Introducing the Dragonflies of British Columbia and the Yukon. 2002. Robert A. Cannings. Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. \$12.95, paperback, 96 pages. ISBN 0-7726-4637-6.

Three groups of insects are particularly attractive to the general public for their beauty and visibility. Many books and field guides are written about butterflies, a few books are written about beetles, and fewer still are written about the glorious dragonflies. Dr. Robert Cannings's book is a useful guide to the recognition and identification of Odonata from westernmost Canada. The small book is loaded with fine color photographs of many species from that area and will serve amateurs and professionals alike as a reference to this rather extensive fauna. I was particularly impressed with the color photograph of a lance-tipped darner in lateral view. This figure is used to illustrate the features of particular interest in identifying the specimens one might encounter during jaunts in the study area.

A short description of habitats along with dragonflies likely to be encountered will be of value to budding, blossoming, and wilting en-

tomologists. I appreciated the brief introduction to this fascinating part of the world. I was pleased to read that the term "dragonfly" is coming to mean any member of the order Odonata, thus giving a common name to all that can be shared in casual conversations. The bulk of the book is given to short descriptions and superb photographs of individual species. Having some personal knowledge of these wonderful organisms, I was pleased with the clarity of text and figures that could be used for effective field identification. For several of the more species-rich genera, like *Aeshna*, *Argia*, and *Somatochlora*, small line drawings of diagnostic features are tastefully presented without distracting from the overall beauty of the layout and the creatures themselves. Dr. Cannings is to be commended for writing such a lucid work that will be of value to folks in the study area; and, because the Okanagan Valley is largely an extension of the Basin and Range Province, it will be useful there as well.

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