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Review of *Damselflies of Texas: A Field Guide*. By  
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**Damselflies of Texas: A Field Guide.** By John C. Abbott. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011. xviii + 268 pp. Photographs, illustrations, maps, appendices, glossary, references, index. \$24.95 paper.

Well-produced field guides are always in demand, and *Damselflies of Texas* is one such. This compact, camera-bag-friendly compendium displays each of the 77 species known to occur, or that have been historically documented, in the state. The guide's first 50 pages are introductory and full of useful detail. There follows a large section devoted to species descriptions and a set of appendices.

Gracile damselflies are normally approachable, unlike their notoriously aloof cousins the robust dragonflies. Even so, it is difficult to obtain a photograph clearly showing all the species diagnostic features. John Abbott and his scientist/illustrator colleague Barrett Anthony Klein have overcome this problem by a combination of tactics. Representative specimens are dissected and each body part is digitally scanned into a file. Through the use of Adobe Photoshop™ and its powerful layers tool, the male damselfly is reconstructed in a standard, top down format, while a series of side views depict both males and females. As with all preserved Odonata, color loss is unavoidable, and so the digital specimens are carefully retouched to match living specimens.

Families are grouped by color-coded pages, and each species is presented in a two-page summary. On the left page are images, diagnostic features, color morphs, and a pronunciation guide to the scientific name. On the opposite page is a short write-up detailing identifying marks and similar species that might cause confusion. Conservation status ratings and habitat preferences are listed, while a short discussion highlights interesting notes. At the top and on the side of the right page appear two very important details: a range map and flight periods. These pieces of information alone will help immensely with identification. The flight period on the species page is a shaded monthly histogram, but actual date ranges are found in the appendices.

In addition to individual species pages, readers will find at the end of the write-ups for larger genera a set of

micrographs showing male genitalia and female mesostigmal plates. These are important taxonomic details for separating some damselflies that are similar in appearance or preserved specimens that have lost color. Color plates with grouped male abdominal segments are also presented. Appendices include a list of damselflies that may eventually be found in the state, details on conservation status, a bibliography and resource list, a glossary and indexes to common and scientific names.

This is an excellent guide to a lesser known group of colorful insects. More than half the U.S. damselfly species occur in Texas, many of which range through the Great Plains. While it belongs in all entomological libraries, odonatophiles east of the Rocky Mountains will find it especially useful. **Forrest L. Mitchell**, *Texas AgriLife Research, Texas A&M System, Stephenville.*