

HOW TO COLLECT *CALIGOS* IN THE CARIBBEAN (LEPIDOPTERA: BRASSOLIDAE)

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RECEIVED FOR PUBLICATION OCTOBER 18, 1961

Saturday evening, January 21st, 1961 saw us at the airport at Port of Spain in Trinidad, B. W. I.

It was hot. The small waiting room was jammed with people who, like us, were flying to Tobago; or with friends waiting to greet folks on an incoming plane from Martinique; or there to say good-bye to passengers about to depart on a giant airliner for London.

Every seat in the waiting room was occupied and standing room itself was at a premium. Suddenly the arrival of the plane from Martinique was announced, causing a rush of sweating humanity to the fence to wave to incoming passengers.

What a relief for us! We took seats, deposited hand bags, coats, (we were soon to return to New York's winter weather) and butterfly nets, and relaxed. But not for long. Mrs. Heineman's eagle eye began to roam and espied a large insect perched atop the molding inside an unoccupied room with a sign on it: "Director of Civil Aviation." (The room, not the insect.) "Isn't that *Erebus odorata* up there?" she said, pointing to the insect aforementioned—forgetting completely that her parents had taught her that it was impolite to point. Wearily I arose from my newly acquired seat (I had been up most of the night collecting moths at "Simla" the Research Station of the New York Zoological Society so superbly run by Dr. William Beebe and his gracious aide, Miss Jocelyn Crane). *E. odorata*, the big black, gaudy moth, was common enough, but I didn't have one from Trinidad. So, tired as I was, I went to look at it, only to be spurred into instant action. Off came my coat and my clip-on bow tie. Out came a net to be set up and pieced together hurriedly, and into the unlocked room of the "Director of Civil Aviation" went Heineman to swing wildly at what was not *odorata* at all but what appeared to me (in my ignorance) to be a *Morpho* different from ones that I had taken in the rain forest the

day before. Alas for me, my net fell short, but the swish dislodged the butterfly which flew out the other door of the Director's room into the area in which customs inspectors were examining the baggage of passengers who had just deplaned.

Oblivious to the fact that I was behind the long baggage tables with the uniformed officials, I continued my frantic swings to no avail. All business stopped. Some of the inspectors themselves joined in the chase, clapping their hands together at the big butterfly whenever it came low enough. This resulted in its departing for another restricted area where immigration authorities were examining passports. Undaunted and intrepid I climbed over the chains that meant "no trespassing" and continued my pursuit.

A vicious swing and a high jump, and I heard a voice cry out with a British accent "He's got it." I felt that the entire chorus of "My Fair Lady" was singing my praises and marched proudly back with the catch to my patient and embarrassed wife. Now, what to do with this large insect with its $4\frac{1}{2}$ " wing spread? "There's a dirty handkerchief that someone dropped" she said. So, delicately, we folded it in the handkerchief and carefully stowed it in the outside pocket of our K.L.M. bag. I drew a deep breath and gave a sigh of relief. But relief was not at hand. "Isn't that another one?" said the wife, nodding towards a room marked "Swiss Bank." My better three-quarters is never wrong. Of course it was another.

This time I was smarter. No rushing, no excitement. "Take your time, man. Easy does it." So I said, quietly, to the teller behind the cage window: "Would you permit me to come in and catch that butterfly, please?" He looked at me with a frightened expression as if to say: "This is either a stickup or the man is crazy" (which all of us entomologists are, of course). "Please," I begged. "Our plane is leaving any moment." Gingerly, he opened the door, one hand on his hip pocket. This time I stood on a chair and picked my beauty off as if it had been an apple on a tree. A quick pinch of the thorax, a triangle made from an old discarded newspaper, and our second treasure was packed away in the other side pocket of the K.L.M. bag just as the departure of our plane was announced.

Rushing back into tie and coat, with net folded away and bags in hand, we started for the boarding gate when a petite woman,

with two small children clinging to her, approached us saying in a timid voice: "Would you care for this one, sir?"

Believe it or not she had caught a third one in her fingers and presented it to us in perfect condition.

A week later we changed planes at Trinidad en route from Tobago to Barbados. I had time to amble into the immigration and customs area for another look. One of the uniformed officials recognizing me, said: "Mister, there was another one here the other night after you left."

Back home we identified them easily as *Caligo insulanus*, Stich. What was this magnificent butterfly doing in an airport at night in such numbers? It is known to fly at dusk. Did the lights attract it or was it possibly drawn in by the odor of bananas, which may have been growing or stacked in the vicinity?

Under any circumstances, you patient readers—if you have been with us this far—should now know how and what to do to collect *Caligos* in the Caribbean.



Heineman, Bernard. 1962. "How to Collect Caligos in the Caribbean (Lepidoptera: Brassolidae)." *Journal of the New York Entomological Society* 70, 61–63.

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