

**Review of the book “*Maharashtratil Phulpakhare*”  
(aka "Butterflies of Maharashtra")**

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As we grow from child to adult through the adolescent span of our life, word "Butterflies" has several meanings with the magical references. There are about 1,42,700 species of the butterflies in the world. This huge number and the colours of butterflies are the reasons for the curiosity about them among us. But the literature available about butterflies is still scanty, particularly in local languages. This lacuna is filled to a little extent by the recent beautiful book for nature lovers, is the “*Maharashtratil Phulpakhare*” (aka "Butterflies of Maharashtra") written by Dr. Raju Kasambe and published by Sahitya Prasar Kendra, Nagpur.

The author being an environmentalist has done a good justice for these beautiful flying jewels. By publishing it, Sahitya Prasar Kendra, Nagpur, has added a much needed book in to the library of naturalists in Maharashtra. The cover page of the book is eye catching and shows the diversity of butterflies in a butterfly outline sketch. Everyone who has realizes the importance of these small insects in the ecosystem and in nature around us would aspire to have such book.

The 152 page book illustrates 216 species of butterflies found in Maharashtra and South India with about 350 colour photographs. The book though titled “Butterflies of Maharashtra” also describes some butterflies which are not found in Maharashtra but are found South India. The blurb on the back cover of the book clearly mentions this fact.

In the first few initial pages Dr. Raju Kasambe has illustrated the life-cycle of the butterflies. He has then summarized about the importance of butterflies in nature which will enrich the amateur’s insight.

The next part of the book describes the butterflies in simple Marathi language giving us information about the common English name, scientific name, the wing span, how to identify the butterfly, habits and distribution of the species. This follows the list specific larval host plants each species prefer.

Another chapter deals with the frequently asked questions about butterflies.

The book has a chapter to migration of butterflies and how the migration is studied by attaching the tags (albeit with example of the famous Monarch migration in North America).

Three more smallish chapters discuss the enemies of butterflies, the self defense strategies in butterflies and the protective mimicry in a very lucid language.

The author has listed the available names and also suggested names to some of the butterflies in local Marathi language. Thus a total of 65 Marathi names are listed.

This has been a rare quality of the book from the point of view of the amateur as well as scientists, and environmentalists. For the successful attempt of bringing out this beautiful book, both the author and the publishers deserve complements.

The only drawback of this excellent book is that the coloured photographs are of small in size, which may cause little difficulty for their identification. A few photographs are too dark to identify. Despite these lacunae the book can very well be viewed as a veritable guide on butterflies for nature enthusiasts in Maharashtra. Considering the quality of the paper and printing the book is priced at a relatively low cost (Rs.300/-) and can be ordered from Sahitya Prasar Kendra, Nagpur, Maharashtra.

**Book Title:** *Maharashtratil Phulpakhare* (aka Butterflies of Maharashtra)

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