Caterpillars feeding on *Ficus* trees in Chimbu mountains (Papua New Guinea)

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Study of caterpillars feeding on four species of fig trees in Chimbu mountains:

• Ficus wassa
• Ficus dammaropsis
• Ficus copiosa
• Ficus ioditricha
WE STUDIED:

• Species composition of caterpillars feeding on fig trees
• Differences between caterpillars feeding on fig trees in Chimbu mountains and in the lowlands in Madang
• Number of fig tree species used as food by each caterpillar
METHODS:
The study is based at our laboratory in Mu Village
METHODS:

1. Collecting caterpillars from the leaves of fig trees
METHODS:

2. Photographing caterpillars
METHODS:

3. Rearing caterpillars in the laboratory
METHODS:

4. Mounting reared moths and butterflies
METHODS:

5. Databasing information in a computer database
RESULTS:
During 14 months of study in 2001-2002, we collected 2,400 caterpillars from 56 species.

*Ficus copiosa* had the highest number of caterpillar species while *Ficus ioditricha* the lowest number of species.
RESULTS:
Most caterpillars were feeding on only 1-2 *Ficus* species
RESULTS:
• Almost all moth species are special to Simbu mountains.
• Only 3 from the 56 Chimbu species live also in Madang lowlands

Asota versicolor: one of the species living both in montane Chimbu and lowland Madang forests
Examples of moths feeding on *Ficus* trees in Chimbu
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