

27. ADDITIONS TO THE LIGHT ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES

Insects in general are known to be attracted to light. Of course, moths outnumber many other groups in this habit, and catches of moths at light sources have regularly been reported. However, little is known about the attraction of butterflies to light, as they are mostly diurnal, or such incidents go unnoticed.

In the past, Usman (1956) recorded a Lycaenid *Talicauda nyseus* attracted to light at Bangalore. Donahue (1962) recorded butterflies attracted to light in India. Shull and Nadkerny (1967) have reported 18 species (Nymphalids, Pierids and Satyrids 5 each, Lycaenid 1, and Hesperids 2) attracted to light in Surat Dangs. Recently, Sharma and Chaturvedi (1999) reported one more species of Nymphalid from Tadoba National Park, and Nair (2001) added three species to the list (two Lycaenids and a Satyrid) of butterflies attracted to light from Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala. Here we report two more species, one Lycaenid from Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai and one Papilionid from Pune, Maharashtra.

During a faunistic survey of Sanjay Gandhi National Park (located in the Mumbai-Thane suburban district in Maharashtra), at around 2330 hrs on September 26, 2001, one of us (RMS) saw a tiny butterfly fluttering and dashing against a tube light in Rest House No. 4 (Kanchan). It was identified as the Lime Blue, *Chilades laius* (Stall) Family Lycaenidae.

On April 17, 2002, at around 2000 hrs, RMS noticed a large butterfly dash against a tube light at his residence at Paul Road in Pune. Ascertaining that it was not a regular visitor, he identified it as Tailed Jay, *Papilio agamemnon* Linn. (Family Papilionidae). Incidentally, this is the first papilionid being reported as attracted to light.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RMS thanks Dr. J.R.B. Alfred, Director, Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata and Dr. H.S. Mehta, Joint Director and Officer-in-Charge, ZSI, HAZFS, Solan for facilities and encouragement.

January 6, 2003

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28. *FICUS PUMILA* L.: A NEW HOST PLANT OF COMMON CROW (*EUPLOEA CORE* CRAMER, LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE)

Common Crow *Euploea core* Cramer (Family Nymphalidae) is one of the commonest butterflies of the Indian region, virtually found in all kinds of habitats up to 2000 m above msl (Kunte 2000). The adult butterfly is a generalist species and feeds on nectar of a wide variety of plants. The larval food plants belong to families Moraceae, Asclepiadaceae and Apocynaceae; the commonly used food plants are *Ficus racemosa*, *Nerium odorum*, *N. oleander* and *Cryptolepis buchanani*.

Here I report a new host plant for the Common Crow. I found a Common Crow caterpillar feeding on Climbing Ficus (or Creeping Rubber plant *Ficus pumila*, Family Moraceae). The caterpillar was feeding on young as well as mature leaves of the

figus, showing no preference. The caterpillar successfully pupated on a nearby fern. Unfortunately, the pupa was destroyed after 10 days of pupation due to heavy rain. Climbing Ficus was introduced into India, and is now a common garden plant. It is a vine that attaches itself with its roots to walls or trees. The species is distributed in East Asia from Japan to North Vietnam.

December 23, 2002

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29. ON THE TAXONOMY AND APPEARANCE OF *MIXOLOPHIA OCHROLAUTA* WARREN (LEPIDOPTERA: GEOMETRIDAE) IN THE KUMAON HIMALAYA

Mixolophia ochrolauta Warren is a rare Emerald moth (Subfamily Geometrinae) known from a male specimen from Bhutan, which is the type, and a female from Nepal. The early stages are unknown. A single female has been recorded in Jones Estate in the Bhimtal valley of the Kumaon Himalaya, extending the known distribution of this taxon westwards. The specimen is in my collection and is described below.

Mixolophia Warren

1894. *Nov. Zool.*: 391.

Mixolophia ochrolauta Warren

1894. *Nov. Zool.*: 391.

Material Examined: 1 ex.: 30.ix.1977 (female).

Forewing Length: 14 mm.

Distribution: Nepal, Bhutan (Prout 1934); Bhutan (Hampson 1895).

Remarks: A new record for the Kumaon Himalaya.

According to Hampson (1895), the antennae of the male are ciliated. The antennae of the specimen examined are simple, hence it is a female. The specimen is not in perfect condition for, although the wings are intact, the scales have been rubbed off in parts, especially around the tornal area of the forewings.

The ground colour is a dull yellowish-green, agreeing with Hampson's (1895) and Prout's (1934) descriptions, but not matching the illustration in Seitz (1915), where the ground colour is a much brighter green. The specimen examined differs in another important aspect, that is the area between the postmedial line and the margin of the forewing *recto* is not striated with white above vein Cu_{1a} , as in the illustration. Hampson (1895) also noted that the veins of the outer area are white. Rather, this area is plain green with a white marginal line in the specimen examined. The specimen matches the descriptions and illustration in all other respects.

The legs of the specimen are intact and all the spurs on the hind tibiae are developed.

DISCUSSION

The specimen was recorded at the end of the SW monsoon. In subfamily Geometrinae, there are very few univoltine species in the area and it is unlikely that this is one of them. It is more likely that there is an earlier generation in spring or at the beginning of the monsoon.

Not much can be inferred about the habitat preferences of this species. It is very rare in the Bhimtal valley and the specimen recorded was probably a straggler from higher or lower elevation. It is certainly very local as well as a Himalayan endemic, but whether its rarity in collections is due to its scarcity in nature or its retiring habits will only be clarified by an understanding of its life history. It is probably commoner in biotopes that have not been thoroughly surveyed so far.

The specimen examined differs somewhat from the other two known specimens. This appears to be a case of infraspecific variation, as commonly occurs in *Episothalma robustaria* Guenée and *Spaniocentra lyra* Swinhoe of the same subfamily.

Warren (1894) and Hampson (1895) described the male, since the female was unknown at the time. Prout (1934) described both sexes. Differences between the sexes appear to be restricted to the structure of the legs and antennae.

According to Prout (1934), the hindlegs of the male type specimen are lacking. Hence, it is not possible to decide whether the species should remain in the monobasic genus *Mixolophia* or be transferred to a section of *Metallochlora* Warren. The main difference between the genera rests on the development of spurs on the hind tibiae of the male. If these are all fully developed, as in *Metallochlora*, then there is little justification for the continuance of *Mixolophia*, since the only remaining differences are details of form and colour.

Hampson (1895) placed *ochrolauta* in the genus *Hemithea* Duponchel, under the section in which the antennae of the male are ciliated and the hind tibiae lack medial spurs. Since Hampson stated that he examined the specimens of the species described in his work, and the only known specimen of *ochrolauta* at that time was the male type, it is evident that the type specimen had its hindlegs in 1895. By the time Prout examined the specimen during the 1930s, the legs were broken off, perhaps due to careless handling.

Proceeding on Hampson's (1895) statement that the male's hind tibiae lack medial spurs, it follows that *Mixolophia* differs from *Metallochlora* sufficiently to be a valid genus and that *ochrolauta* is correctly separated from *Metallochlora*.

February 14, 2003

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Aravind, N A. 2005. "Ficus Pumila L.: a new Host Plant of Common Crow (Euploea Core Cramer, Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae)." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 102, 129–130.

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