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### ***Short Communication***

## **OBSERVATIONS ON BUTTERFLIES FEEDING ON ROTTING JACKFRUITS**

Adult butterflies feed mainly on flower nectar and other sugars, such as those contained in the sap of wounded trees and rotting fruits. Some butterflies live on pollen as well than nectar. The males of many butterfly species have additional nutritional requirements. They flock to mud puddles to sip up dissolved salts. Some butterflies also feed on animal droppings and dead animals in order to obtain nutrients such as carbon, nitrogen and amino acids. Some can even absorb human sweat that contains electrolytes that they find valuable.

Fruits attract certain butterfly species and they have been observed to use oranges, grapes, apples and bananas as food source. During July and August 2003, the authors had the opportunity to observe for a few days, a number of butterflies visiting rotting jackfruits fallen under the jack tree as well as over-ripe ones still on the jack tree. Attracted to the fruits, these butterflies were flitting on the fruits and sipping the exudation from the fruits for varying lengths of time, throughout the day. Between the sips, the butterflies left the fruits and apparently flew aimlessly around or gave chase to one another for short distances. Interestingly, on one day even while it was drizzling the butterflies were found actively sipping away the sap from the rotting jackfruits. A species-wise account of the butterflies that we found involved in this activity is given below. There is only a little work that has been done on the feeding habits and food sources of adult butterflies as compared to those of caterpillars (Kunte, 2000). Our present observations provide information on 12 species of butterflies (all belonging to the family Nymphalidae), using non-nectar food source.

1. Clipper, *Parthenos sylvia* Cramer : Though rarely found in the plains, the species frequently attended the rotting jackfruits for a brief period of time.
2. Common Baron, *Euthalia aconthea* (Moore) : Both males and females of the species regularly attended the rotting jackfruits.
3. Gaudy Baron, *Euthalia lubentina* (Cramer) : Observed only once visiting the rotting jackfruit.

4. Common Sailer, *Neptis hylas* Moore : Only once seen attending the rotting jackfruit.
5. Commander, *Moduza procris* (Cramer) : A frequent visitor to the rotting jackfruit. During the period of observation, more and more members of the species were found attracted to rotting jackfruits.
6. Grey Count, *Tanaecia lepidea* (Butler) : Found to be regular visitor of the rotting jackfruits. The species is found even attracted to the over-ripe fruits on jack trees.
7. Black Rajah, *Charaxes fabius* (Fabricius) : Occasionally found visiting the over-ripe fruits, but never visited the rotting ones.
8. Nigger, *Orsotrioena medus* (Fabricius) : A regular sipper of the over-ripe fruits and the rotting ones.
9. Common Bush Brown, *Mycalesis perseus* (Fabricius) : A regular sipper of both, over-ripe and the rotting jackfruits.
10. Common Evening Brown, *Melanitis leda* (Linnaeus) : In association with the Nigger and the Common Bush Brown butterflies, the Common Evening Brown is a regular visitor of the rotting jackfruits.
11. Common Palm fly, *Elymnias hypermnestra* (Linnaeus) : Both the males and females of the species regularly, though for a short while only, attended the rotting jackfruits.
12. Chocolate Pansy, *Precis iphita* (Cramer) : Not a regular visitor, but can be seen visiting the rotting jackfruits for very brief periods.

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#### REFERENCE

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