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FIRST REPORT OF THE OCCURRENCE OF SOME RARE BUTTERFLIES (LEPIDOPTERA : RHOPALOCERA) FROM CHHATTISGARH, CENTRAL INDIA

R.M. SHARMA AND KAILASH CHANDRA

Zoological Survey of India, Central Zone Regional Centre, Jabalpur-482 002, M.P.

INTRODUCTION

The State of Chhattisgarh in Central India was carved out from Madhya Pradesh in the year 2000. It lies between latitudes 17° 46' to 20° 34' N latitude and 80°18' to 82°15' E longitude. covering an area of 1,35,194 sq. km comprising of 16 districts and shares its borders with Madhya Pradesh on the northwest, Maharashtra on the west, Andhra Pradesh on the South, Orissa on the east, Jharkhand on the northeast and Uttar Pradesh on the north.

During the course of a general faunistic survey conducted in the Kangerghati National Park (18° 45' to 18° 56'30'' N and 81°51'30'' to 82° 10' E), Dist. Bastar, Chhattisgarh, during March 2007, the two species of butterflies dealt with below were encountered. A perusal of literature especially Chandra *et al.* (2007) revealed that the occurrence of those two species was not yet reported from Central India. Thus, they constitute new records for Central India in general and Chhattisgarh in particular. Both the species are very rare locally and even in the areas of their distribution elsewhere.

Family NYMPHALIDAE

Subfamily APATURINAE

1. *Euripus consimilis* (Westwood,1850)

The Painted Courtesan

(Plate-I, 1 & 2)

The genus *Euripus* Westwood includes two Indian species, *E. consimilis* Westwood and *E. nyctelius* Doubleday. Both the species are rare and categorized as endangered.

Material examined : 1G Kotamsar Gufa and around, 15.iii.2007; 1G Jagdaghat, 16.iii.2007; 1G Champal Nallah, Kangerghati National Park, Dist. Bastar, Chhattisgarh, 17.iii.2007, R.M. Sharma Coll.

Diagnosis : Wing expanse : 60-85 mm G : upperside, forewing black with broad white streaks and spots; which includes a long white streak from the base in area 1, a slender streak in the cell,

a broad, oblique median band followed by a row of paired white streaks in interspaces 3, 4 and 5; a post-discal series of slender streaks. A terminal row of white dots, elongated into streaks towards the apex. Hindwing white traversed by black veins. Termen black with a subterminal row of four or five crimson spots posteriorly and beyond this a regular terminal row of white spots. Underside bears crimson basal markings. E : Similar to the male, except that the upperside of the hindwing, clear white or crimson-coloured and the tornal red spots are absent. Basal crimson patch on the underside of the hindwing present. The antennae black, the head, thorax and abdomen black and marked with white beneath.

Food plants : *Trema orientalis* (Urticaceae) and *Albizzia stipulata* (Leguminosae).

Distribution : India : *South India* (Western Ghats) : Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra (Goankar, 1996). *Central India* : Present record from Chhattisgarh. *North India* : East from Dehra Dun (Wynter Blyth, 1957, Haribal., 1992). *North East India* : Assam, Sikkim (Wynter Blyth, 1957, Haribal., 1992). *East India* : West Bengal (Jalpaiguri, Buxa) (ZSI, Envis Center), Jeypore (Eastern Ghats, Wynter Blyth, 1957). *Elsewhere* : Indonesia (Sundaland), Myanmar, Nepal, N. Thailand (Varshney, 1994).

Conservation Status : Rare. Placed under Schedule II, Part II of IWPA (1972).

Remarks : The Painted Courtesan frequents dense jungles and can be found widely distributed in the regions of moderate to heavy rainfall and low elevation. Males have a weak, fluttering flight like day -flying moths of the family *Zygaenidae* and may be seen resting with wings partially open. The flight and habits of females resemble that of the Danaids especially the Crows. It visits *Lantana* flowers.

Family PIERIDAE

Subfamily COLIADINAE

2. *Gandaca harina* (Horsfield, 1829)

The Tree Yellow

(Plate-I, 3 & 4)

The monotypic genus *Gandaca* is represented by a single species in India with three subspecies viz. *andamana* Moore, *assamica* Moore and *nicobarica* Evans.

Material examined : 1G, Champal Nallah, 17.iii.2007, Kangerghati National Park, Dist. Bastar, Chhattisgarh, R.M. Sharma Coll.

Diagnosis : Wing expanse : 35-45 mm G : Yellow and E : White above, both absolutely unmarked except for the black apex and termen on the forewing.

Distribution : India : Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Assam, Chhattisgarh (Present record) and Sikkim. *Elsewhere* : Myanmar.

Remarks : This species occurs in the wet forested areas of low elevations and can be found fluttering in shaded areas in association of Grass Yellows to which it shows close resemblance. Males do visit flowers. The subspecific status of the population occurring in Central India can be ascertained on getting more specimens.

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PLATE -I



1. *Euphydryas auronta* (Westwood) (Upperside) ♂



2. *Euphydryas auronta* (Westwood) (Upperside) ♀



3. *Pieris brassicae* (Housefield) (Upperside) ♂



4. *Pieris brassicae* (Housefield) (Upperside) ♀