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CONFIRMATION OF *GRAPHIUM DOSON ELEIUS* (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: PAPILIONIDAE) IN DELHI, INDIA

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Introduction

Two subspecies of the Common Jay butterfly (*Graphium doson* (C. & R. Felder, 1864)) are known from India, *G. d. eleius* (Fruhstorfer, 1907) from southern India to West Bengal and *G. d. axion* (C. & R. Felder, 1864) from Jammu & Kashmir along the Himalaya to north east India and ? Delhi (Varshney & Smetacek, 2015). They are distinguished primarily by the dark sub-basal bar on the hind wing *recto* which is nearly obsolete in *G. d. axion* but well developed *G. d. eleius*. Sharma *et al.* (2019) reported *G. d. eleius* from Jammu and Kanpur; Smetacek (2009) reported the presence of *G. doson* in Delhi but the subspecies was not known because no specimens were examined. *G. doson* feeds on *Polyalthia longifolia* in Delhi and is now well established species with several annual generations.

Observation

On 24.ix.2019, several caterpillars of *G. doson* were observed on a *Polyalthia* tree in west Delhi. These were bred and on 7.xi.2019, an imago emerged. This was sent to the Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal, Uttarakhand for identification. It was confirmed to be a specimen of *G. d. eleius* the typically southern Indian subspecies. The specimen is in the collection of the Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal.

Discussion

This record confirms that *G. d. eleius* has extended its distribution in recent years from southern India to Kanpur, Delhi, Punjab, Jammu in India and Punjab in Pakistan. The reason for the range extension is not only the widespread plantation of *Polyalthia longifolia*

as an ornamental tree throughout northern India but perhaps some favorable climatic change, since *P. longifolia* has been cultivated throughout northern India for over 150 years (Brandis, 1874), 140 years before *G. doson* was first recorded in the area.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my wife, Varsha, for supporting me and Sohail Madan and his team at the Butterfly Park of the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary for inspiration.

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Fig.1: *Graphium doson*, 7. xi.2019, Delhi