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TABLE OF CONTENTS

REDISCOVERY OF SMALL SILVERFORK, <i>LETHE JALAUROIDA</i> (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) FROM GARHWAL, UTTARAKHAND, INDIA by Harish Bhatt, Shankar Kumar & Paramjit Singh	198
<i>AEGLE MARMELOS</i> (RUTACEAE): A NEW LARVAL HOST PLANT FOR THE BLUE MORMON BUTTERFLY <i>PAPILIO POLYMNESTOR</i> by Raju Kasambe & Dilip Giri	201
CONFIRMATORY RECORD OF WAX DART <i>CUPITHA PURREEA</i> MOORE, 1881 (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: HESPERIIDAE) FROM JHARKHAND, INDIA by Rajib Dey, Soumyajit Mondal, Supratim Deb, Subhajit Roy & Sourabh Biswas	205
NEW RECORD OF TAWNY RAJAH <i>CHARAXES BERNARDUS</i> (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) FROM KUMAON, UTTARAKHAND, INDIA by Shankar Kumar, Paramjit Singh, Sagar Balmiki & Kasim Bilal	207
<i>BURMEIA LEESI</i> MINET, 2013 (LEPIDOPTERA: EPICOPEIIDAE): A NEW GENUS AND SPECIES FOR INDIA by Peter Smetacek	209
REPORT ON ADULT BEETLE <i>CELOSTERNA SCABRATOR</i> (FABRICIUS, 1781) (COLEOPTERA: CERAMBYCIDAE: LAMIINAE) FEEDING ON VEGETABLE PIGEONPEA by Harshita A. P., Gopali, J. B., Ramanagouda S. H. Mudassar & Sangamesh, R. H.	211
FIRST RECORD OF <i>PRIONOMMA BIGIBBOSUM</i> (COLEOPTERA: CERAMBYCIDAE) FROM NEPAL by Sajjan K.C., Rajkumar K.C. & Bhanubhakta Adhikari	214
REDISCOVERY OF TIGER HOPPER <i>OCHUS SUBVITTATUS</i> (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: HESPERIIDAE) FROM UTTARAKHAND, INDIA by Shankar Kumar, Paramjit Singh & Sundar Kumar	216
NEW HESPERIIDAE (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA) LARVAL HOST PLANT ASSOCIATIONS FROM WEST BENGAL, INDIA by Rajib Dey	218
SOME NEW DISTRIBUTION RECORDS OF LYCAENID BUTTERFLIES IN NEPAL by Sajjan K.C. & Anisha Sapkota	226
<i>ERANTHEMUM ROSEUM</i> (ACANTHACEAE) AS NEW LARVAL HOST PLANT FOR THE BENGAL SPOTTED FLAT <i>CELAENORRHINUS PUTRA</i> (MOORE, [1866]) by Raju Kasambe & Dilip Giri	230
FIRST RECORDS FOR NEPAL OF TWO HESPERIIDAE: <i>GEROSIS SINICA</i> AND <i>CEPHRENES ACALLE</i> by Piet van der Poel	233
CONFIRMATION OF <i>RAGADIA CRISILDA</i> (HEWITSON 1862) (LEPIDOPTERA: SATYRINAE) AND <i>MATAPA CRESTA</i> (EVANS 1949) (LEPIDOPTERA: HESPERIIDAE) IN WEST BENGAL, INDIA	

by Sourabh Biswas, Sandip Das, Rahul Biswas, Amartya Bagchi, Ram Chandra Sha & Lakhu Mahato	236
<i>PSILOGRAMMA VATES</i> (LEPIDOPTERA: SPHINGIDAE) IN GUJARAT by Peter Smetacek, Rajashree Bhuyan & Pratiksha Patel	238
AN ADDITION TO THE KNOWN AGANAINAE FAUNA (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: EREBIDAE) OF INDIA by B. Lalnghahpuii & Peter Smetacek	240
A NEW RECORD OF <i>FLOS CHINENSIS</i> (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) FROM WESTERN HIMALAYA, INDIA by Shankar Kumar, Param Jit Singh, Sundar Kumar & Niharika Bisht	242
LIFE CYCLE OF <i>OLIGONYCHUS ORYZAE</i> (HIRST, 1926), AN IMPORTANT PEST OF PADDY ON 3 DIFFERENT <i>KHARIF</i> CULTIVARS AND <i>BORO</i> CULTIVAR UNDER LABORATORY CONDITIONS by Sugandha Mukhopadhyay & Salil Kumar Gupta	244
A NEW ALTITUDINAL RECORD FOR <i>PORITIA HEWITSONI</i> (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) FROM UTTARAKHAND, INDIA by Akash Gulalia	249
EXTENSION OF THE KNOWN DISTRIBUTION OF THE CLUB SILVERLINE BUTTERFLY, <i>SPINDASIS SYAMA</i> (HORSEFIELD, 1829) (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) TO SATPURA TIGER RESERVE, MADHYA PRADESH by Anupam Sisodia & Himanshu Yadav	251
EDITORIAL: REGARDING A CASE OF PLAGIARISM by Peter Smetacek	253

REDISCOVERY OF TIGER HOPPER *OCHUS SUBVITTATUS* (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: HESPERIIDAE) FROM UTTARAKHAND, INDIA

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Reviewer: Peter Smetacek

Introduction

Tiger Hopper *Ochus subvittatus* (Moore, 1878) is a small butterfly. A single subspecies is recorded from India namely, *O. s. subradiatus* Moore, 1878, distributed from Uttarakhand to north-east India (Varshney & Smetacek, 2015). It was last documented from Uttarakhand by Evans in 1949. It is worth mentioning here that this species was not recorded from Garhwal by Singh & Sondhi (2016). During a survey organized at various sites of Kumaon from March 2016 to September 2020, we have recorded a total of 09 (nine) individuals of *O. subvittatus*. These are the first records of this butterfly from Uttarakhand after a long gap and hence claimed as “rediscovery”.

Observations

During a field survey, two individuals (Figs. 1 & 2) of *O. subvittatus* were observed at 1130 hours on 15.ix.2016 at Balighat (29.87688 N; 79.78657 E), altitude 932 m, district Bageshwar, Uttarakhand near a forest opening. It was resting on a blade of grass. A single individual was also recorded at 1030 hours on 02.x.2016 near the motor road at Baram, Pithoragarh (29.85217 N; 80.35675 E), altitude 847 m. In 2020, a total of 06 (six) individuals were observed from Tuped village (29.8672 N; 79.8065 E), altitude 1012 m, of Bageshwar district. Two were mud-puddling and the others were resting near the motor road. These individuals were recorded at 1140

hours on 11.ix.2020. Sites where *O. subvittatus* was photographed have been shown in figure 3.

The sighting of this species after a long time indicates the lack of the detailed surveys in Uttarakhand. Bageshwar is a hot spot for the butterfly fauna and hence immediate attention should be given so that the documentation and conservation of butterflies present there can be completed. In our opinion this species was always present there. The main reason behind the absence for a long time, is the small size of this species, due to which it can be easily overlooked by beginners. Another reason is the absence of observations at the right time and right place. We suggest that repeated systematic and scientifically planned surveys should be organized in different sites of Kumaon and Garhwal throughout the year to document the diversity of butterflies. There are many more butterfly species which are yet to be rediscovered or added to the known fauna of the state.

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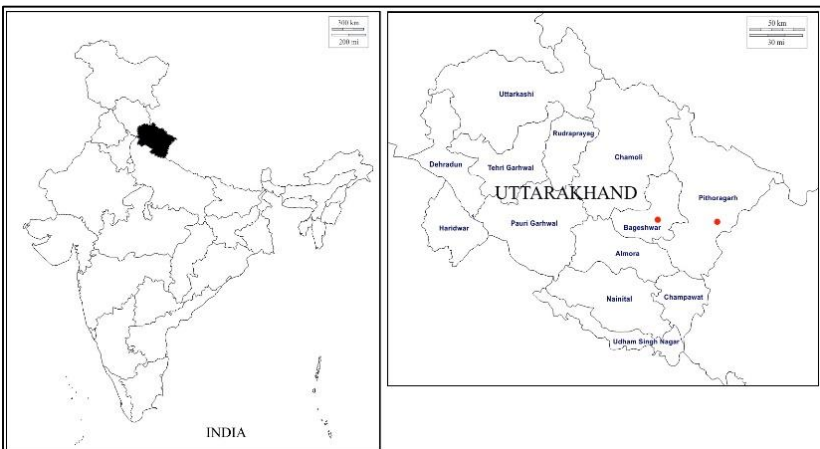


Fig.3: The red dots represents the sites where *Ochus subvittatus* was observed.