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# BIONOTES

A Quarterly Newsletter for Research Notes and News  
On Any Aspect Related with Life Forms

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Cover Photo of founder of BIONOTES *Late* Dr. R.K. Varshney

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

OBITUARY: OUR FOUNDER, DR. RAJENDRA KUMAR VARSHNEY by Ashutosh Varshney & Anurag Varshney	35
PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN by Peter Smetacek	37
PUBLICATIONS OF DR. R.K. VARSHNEY by Bandana Subedi	40
CITY IF NOT FOREST: NEW HABITAT RECORD OF <i>MACROMIA CINGULATA</i> RAMBUR,1842 (ODONATA, MACROMIIDAE) by C. Susanth Kumar & Arya Meher.B. S	48
<i>DIOSCOREA ESCULENTA</i> (LOUR.) BURKILL AS A LARVAL HOST PLANT OF <i>TAGIADES</i> <i>JAPETUS</i> (STOLL, [1781]) (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: HESPERIIDAE) by Smritirekha Bortamuly & Rajib Dey	52
RECORD OF <i>STUENINGERIA NEPALENSIS</i> LEHMANN, 2019 (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: METARBELIDAE) IN BHUTAN by Jatishwor Singh Irungbam	56
FIRST RECORDS FOR NEPAL OF <i>ALBULINA ARCASEIA</i> AND <i>ALBULINA PHARIS</i> (LYCAENIDAE) FROM THE HREBLAY COLLECTION by Piet Van Der Poel & Zsolt Bálint	59
SIGHTING OF PLAIN TIGER ( <i>DANAUS CHRYSIPPUS</i> , LINN., 1758) FORM <i>DORIPPUS</i> IN NEW DELHI, INDIA by Rajesh Chaudhary	64
FIRST RECORD OF COMMON CILIATE BLUE BUTTERFLY <i>ANTHENE EMOLUS</i> (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) FROM UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA by Sushmita, Babita Sharma & Ashok Kumar	65
ARECA PALM <i>DYPSIS LUTESCENS</i> (ARECACEAE) AS NEW LARVAL HOST PLANT FOR THE GIANT REDEYE BUTTERFLY <i>GANGARA THYRSIS</i> (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: HESPERIIDAE) by Raju Kasambe	67
REPORT OF A LIVE RECORD OF <i>NEPTIS ASPASIA</i> (SYN: <i>PHAEDYMA ASPASIA</i> ), LEECH, 1890, (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE: LIMENITIDINAE: NEPTINI) FROM INDIA AFTER 68 YEARS by Chandrasekharan VK, Balakrishnan Valappil, Vidya Venkatesh, Gauri D Desai & Purnendu Roy	70
AVIAN DIVERSITY IN URBAN AREAS OF LAKE TOWN, KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL by A. Chowdhury	73
FIRST REPORT OF GENUS <i>PADENIA</i> MOORE, 1882 (LEPIDOPTERA: EREBIDAE: ARCTIINAE: LITHOSIINI) FROM ASSAM, INDIA by Monish Kumar Thapa	76

- MURRAYA KOENIGII* (RUTACEAE), A NEW LARVAL HOST PLANT OF *ANTHENE LYCAENINA* (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE)  
by Tanmoy Bhowmick 78
- EGG CANNIBALISM BY CATERPILLARS OF THE TAWNY COSTER BUTTERFLY, *ACRAEA TERPSICORE* (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) IN INDIA  
by Raghavendra Rajadhyaksha & Raju Kasambe 81
- NEW RECORD OF FREAK *CALINAGA* (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) FROM EASTERN HIMALAYA, NEPAL  
by Sanjaya Raj Tamang & Shristee Panthee 83
- FOUR ADDITIONS TO THE LANTERNFLY (INSECTA: FULGOROIDEA: FULGORIDAE) FAUNA OF NEPAL  
by Sajjan K.C. & Bishnu Prasad Neupane 86
- GENERA OF ANTS ASSOCIATED WITH LARVAE OF PLAINS CUPID (*CHILADES PANDAVA*, HORSFIELD, 1829) (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) INFESTING CYCAS, IN DELHI, INDIA, AND AN INSIGHT INTO THE NATURE OF THEIR INTERACTION  
by Rajesh Chaudhary & Vinesh Kumar 90
- CHECKLIST OF BUTTERFLIES (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA) FROM FOUR DISTRICTS OF CHHATTISGARH, INDIA WITH THREE ADDITIONS TO THE STATE FAUNA OF BUTTERFLIES OF CHHATTISGARH  
by H. N. Tandan, Gulab Chand, Ravi Naidu, Swati Tandan, Gulshan Kumar Sahu, Ramanand Agrawal & Tanuja 98
- OBSERVATION OF *OROLESTES SELYSI* (INSECTA: ODONATA: LESTIDAE) FROM ASSAM, INDIA  
by Reji Chandran, Thomson Saburaj, Suresh V Kurup & A. Vivek Chandran 109
- SOME IMPORTANT RECORDS OF BUTTERFLIES FROM DHANKUTA AND SUNSARI, NEPAL  
by Sajjan K.C 111
- NEW RECORDS OF *PSEUDANAPHES SIKKIMANUS* (INSECTA: CHALCIDOIDEA: MYMARIDAE) FROM MEGHALAYA, INDIA  
by Bankerdonbor Kharbisnop & Sudhanya R. Hajong 117
- EXTENSION OF THE KNOWN FLOWERING PERIOD OF *RHODODENDRON ARBOREUM* TO JUNE IN NAINITAL DISTRICT, UTTARAKHAND, INDIA  
by Ambica Agnihotri 119
- A NEW SPECIES OF *LEMAIREIA* NÄSSIG & HOLLOWAY (LEPIDOPTERA: SATURNIIDAE, SATURNIINAE) FROM NORTH-EASTERN INDIA  
by Stefan Naumann & Peter Smetacek 122

<i>LYMANTRIA (PORTHETRIA) APICEBRUNNEA</i> (INSECTA: EREBIDAE: LYMANTRIINAE) IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH: AN ADDITION TO THE INDIAN FAUNA by Peter Smetacek & Ambica Agnihotri	127
SYMPATRY OF <i>B. LUDLOWI</i> AND <i>B. LIDDERDALII</i> AND RANGE EXTENSION OF <i>BHUTANITIS LUDLOWI</i> IN BHUTAN by Sonam Dorji & Kuenga Tshomo Dorji	129
THE SMALLEST KNOWN INDIAN CABBAGE WHITE <i>PIERIS CANIDIA</i> (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: PIERIDAE) by Shristee Panthee & Ambica Agnihotri	132
FEEDING ECOLOGY OF THE INDIAN EAGLE OWL <i>BUBO BENGALENSIS</i> (AVES: STRIGIDAE) IN LUCKNOW DISTRICT, UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA by Daya Shanker Sharma, Ankit Sinha, Adesh Kumar & Amita Kanaujia	134
INDIVIDUAL VARIATION IN <i>NYCTEMERA ADVERSATA</i> (INSECTA: LEIPDOPTERA: EREBIDAE) IN THE INDIAN HIMALAYA by Peter Smetacek & Ambica Agnihotri	145

# A NEW SPECIES OF *LEMAIREIA* NÄSSIG & HOLLOWAY (LEPIDOPTERA: SATURNIIDAE, SATURNIINAE) FROM NORTH-EASTERN INDIA

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Reviewer: Irungbam, J.S.

## Abstract

A new species of the genus *Lemaireia* Nässig & Holloway, 1987 is described from the north-eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh; it is compared with *L. luteoepplus* Nässig & Holloway, 1988. For both taxa, males and their genital structures are figured. Females and preimaginal instars remain unknown at present.

**Keywords:** Himalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, *Lemaireia*, new species

## Introduction

The genus *Lemaireia* was established by Nässig & Holloway with *Antheraea loepoides* Butler, 1880 being its type species. At the time of the generic description only four taxa were known, two of them described in a second parallel publication by Nässig & Holloway (1988), which was planned originally to contain also the generic description but then eventually was published a little later than Holloway (1987) which now contains the original diagnosis. In the last 25 years, the number of described taxa in *Lemaireia* increased to 11, with the latest description of *L. daparo* Jiang *et al.*, 2021 from Sichuan and Yunnan, PR China. Those authors gave an overview about published taxa and literature about the genus and figured the known Chinese species. The genus is known from the north-eastern parts of India via Myanmar, Laos, Thailand to China, Vietnam, West Malaysia and from the islands of Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and Mindanao.

Records for the genus are completely missing in publications exclusively on the Indian fauna, such as Hampson (1893), Arora & Gupta (1979) and Chandra *et al.* (2019), which shows that the records of *Lemaireia* specimens

in India are rare. The only report besides the original description of *L. luteoepplus* is by Sondhi *et al.* (2021) who mention one specimen record from Arunachal Pradesh. Although tentatively identified as *L. luteoepplus luteoepplus* in image 463 in their paper, the authors note that further research is necessary.

Following is a description of the twelfth species in the genus:

### *Lemaireia himalayana* n. sp.

Holotype (Fig. 1a, recto; Fig. 1b, verso): Male, India (NE), C. Arunachal Pradesh, Apatani area, Ziro valley 1800 m, vi.1990, leg. local collector; GP 2600/19 SNB; barcode SNB 6315. – A red holotype label will be added accordingly. The holotype will be deposited within the Rainer Seegers Foundation in the collections of Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin, Germany.

**Etymology:** *L. himalayana* n. sp. is the only Himalayan species of the genus and named for its origin.

### Description

Male (Figs. 1a, dorsal view, & b, ventral view).

Vol. 23 (2 & 3), September, 2021

Length of forewing, measured from base to apex: 37 mm.

Wing expanse, measured from forewing apex to centre of thorax and doubled: 88 mm.

Head, thorax, abdomen and ground colour of the forewing upperside intense orange-brown. The wings bear the typical yellow and orange pattern characteristic of the genus. Antennae orange-brown, quadripectinate, 9.0 mm in length, with 25 segments in total, maximum length of rami 1.3 mm.

Forewing apex elongate, produced with slightly rounded tornus, the outer margin concave. Antemedial area orange-brown, central part of the medial area egg-yolk yellow, basal portion of the medial area orange-brown, separated by a serrate line from the antemedial area. In the centre of the yellow medial area an almost round, orange-brown ocellus, outwardly defined by black scales, of 3.5 mm diameter. The postmedial line consists of an inner orange brown and an outer yellow zigzag band, the costal half of this line medially with black scales. Postmedial area again orange-brown, with a violet apical patch and a yellow portion at the lower angle. In between the veins is a row of submarginal small dark greyish patches. Outer margin dark yellow.

Hindwing groundcolour yolk yellow, with small antemedial and medial orange-brown patches around the abdominal margin, the medial patch reaching the round hindwing ocellus, which has an orange-brown centre with central hyaline patch, circled with light blue and a broad black line, and is of 4.5 mm diameter in total. Additional markings are a blackish tiny zigzag postmedial line, followed by a row of larger orange brown and smaller black patches. Outer margin darker yellow.

On ventral surface, both fore- and hindwings with pinkish orange antemedial area, suffused there with white scales. Forewing medial area yellow with central orange-brown ocellus, outer margin of that ocellus somewhat darker than centre, median area outwardly defined by a dark brown zigzag postmedial line.

## BIONOTES

Postmedial area darker, orange, marginal zone more pinkish, with dark grey subapical patch and a row of small patches of same colour between the veins. Hindwing medial area yellow, the ocellus dark red with a black ring and a pink shade directed to the anal margin. The median area is separated by a serrate, dark grey postmedial line. The postmedial area is yellow, suffused with pinkish scales and with a row of small dark blue patches. Outer fringe dark yellow.

Male genitalia (Figs. 4, 7a – c): Uncus with one central process, sclerotized at its ventral end. Dorsal process of the valves prolate, bent and sclerotized, internal process with very short dorsal thorn and a long, broad and acute process. Saccus very short, triangular, juxta with two lateral broad-based processes, tapered to their tips. Aedeagus right lateral with broad sclerite, right and left lateral with a serrate margin. Vesica with apical sclerite with two larger and three smaller spines.

Female and preimaginal instars are unknown.

### Distinctive characters and discussion

The species described here is compared with its probable nearest relative, *L. luteopeplus*, described from the Khasi Hills in Meghalaya, India. Not many records for that species exist to our knowledge, and aside from the small type series in the Natural History Museum, London (holotype and one male paratype; Figs 2a & b) with unknown collection date, but bequeathed by Rothschild in 1939, we know only of two further males in the senior author's collection (Figs. 3a & b). They bear the locality "India, Mizoram, Phawngpui, x.1990, leg. local collector" and are morphologically similar to the type specimens. Also, male genital structures of the holotype (Fig. 5; reproduced from Nässig & Holloway, 1988) compare well with those of a Mizoram specimen (Fig. 6).

*L. himalayana* n. sp. differs from *L. luteopeplus* by its somewhat larger wingspan and the somewhat more quadrate, broader form of the wings. It is of more intense colouration, the ocelli on dorsal side are little

larger, and on ventral side the antemedial and postmedial areas are more orange, in contrast to a yellow colour in *L. luteoepplus*. Male genitalia of both species differ significantly: *L. luteoepplus* has a more triangular dorsal process of the valves, the inner process has a long and bent dorsal thorn and a short and broad internal process, much broader than in *L. himalayana* n. sp. The saccus of *L. luteoepplus* is larger and more triangular; the lateral processes of the juxta have a narrow base and are longer, and the aedeagus is less sclerotized, less serrate on its margin; the vesica has only one larger and one smaller apical spine.

Samples of both taxa were analysed in the barcoding project of the University of Guelph, Canada, and results show about 2% divergence of COI barcodes in the resulting tree. The system assigns two different automatically created Bin Code numbers, that of *L. himalayana* n. sp. being ADQ8984 (Barcode of Life, 2021).

While *L. luteoepplus* is known only from two localities at medium elevation south of the Brahmaputra River, the known localities of *L. himalayana* n. sp. are two places in the Himalayan foothills in central Arunachal Pradesh, India, well separated from each other by the wide lowland valley of the Brahmaputra. A similar separation of species south and north of this lowland area was mentioned in several other cases of Saturniidae already, e.g., for *Archaeoattacus edwardsii* (White, 1859) versus *Arch. malayanus* Kurosawa & Kishida, 1984 (Naumann *et al.*, 2016), or *Saturnia zuleika* Hope, 1843 versus *S. lesoudieri* Le Moul, 1933 (Naumann & Nässig, 2010)

In general morphological differences between nearly related species within the genus *Lemaireia* are not easily visible and mainly can be mentioned when large series are available. In our case only very few specimens were available to us, but the external morphological differences to its nearest relative and other species in addition to

## BIONOTES

differences in male genitalic structures, results of DNA barcoding and zoogeographical reasons supported and justified proposing *L. himalayana* n. sp. as a different species.

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*BIONOTES*

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Fig.1: *Lemaireia himalayana* n. sp., male holotype, India, Arunachal Pradesh, dorsal view



Fig.2: *Lemaireia himalayana* n. sp., male holotype, India, Arunachal Pradesh, ventral view



Fig.3: *Lemaireia luteopeplus*, male holotype, India, Meghalaya, Khasi Hills, dorsal view, NHM



Fig.4: *Lemaireia luteopeplus*, male holotype, India, Meghalaya, Khasi Hills, ventral view, NHM



Fig.5: *Lemaireia luteopeplus*, male, India, Mizoram, dorsal view



Fig.6: *Lemaireia luteopeplus*, male, India, Mizoram, ventral view



Fig.7: *Lemaireia himalayana* n. sp., holotype, male genitalia prep. no. 2600/19 Naumann



Fig.8: *Lemaireia luteopeplus*, holotype, male genitalia prep. no. B.M. Sat. 531.



Fig.8: *Lemaireia luteopeplus*, India, Mizoram, male genitalia prep. No. 2601/19 Naumann.



Fig.9: *Lemaireia himalayana* n. sp., same genitalia as in Fig. 4, lateral view.



Fig.10: *Lemaireia himalayana* n. sp., same genitalia as in Fig. 4, posterier view.



Fig.11 *Lemaireia himalayana* n. sp., same genitalia as in Fig. 4, Aedeagus.