

Westward Range Extension of the Moth, *Amata sperbius*, (Lepidoptera: Erebidae) to Nepal

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Introduction

On the Indian subcontinent, *Amata sperbius* (Fabricius, 1787) was reported from Sikkim to Burma (Hampson, 1898). It was subsequently recorded from Bihar (Fletcher, 1925), Maharashtra and Sri Lanka (Gurule et al., 2010). Beyond the Indian subcontinent, it has been reported from China, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines (Gurule et al., 2010) and Korea (Przybyłowicz et al., 2016).

Observations

Opportunistic Lepidoptera surveys were conducted on the premises of the Institute of Forestry, Pokhara (Nepal) between February, 2017 and August, 2018. During the daytime, butterflies and moths were observed and photographed, while a mercury vapour lamp at night served to attract moths, which were then photographed and identified.

A. sperbius was photographed on 4th May, 2017 in the morning survey (8am to 12 pm) and on 2nd April, 10th May, 19th June and 3rd August, 2018, both at night and during the day time. During the month of June, 2018, it was first observed settling on a leaf of *Calotropis*, the remaining observations were on grass. It is a low-flying moth, which settles frequently.

Material Examined

1 male, 3 females: 3 August 2018, Pokhara, Nepal.

Forewing length: 13-14 mm.

In Coll. S. Panthee, Pokhara, Nepal.

Result and Discussion

This species was erroneously reported from Delhi by Singh et al. (2014), who gave the primary source for this information as Fletcher (1925). However, Fletcher (1925) does not mention Delhi in the moth's distribution. It is possible that Singh et al. (2014) confused the town of Pusa in Bihar with the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in Delhi, since this institute is familiarly known as the Pusa Institute. The Institute, then the Imperial Agricultural Research Institute, was shifted from Pusa, Bihar to Delhi in 1936 following a major earthquake, so it is quite certain that the Pusa referred to by Fletcher (1925) was, in fact, the town in Bihar.

Haruta (1992-2000) edited six volumes on the moths

of Nepal based on extensive surveys throughout the country. However, *A. sperbius* was not recorded in this work.

Our records over a period of 2 years strongly suggest that the moth is a resident in Nepal and is active for a limited period during the year. The present records constitute a north westward extension to the known distribution of this species, from Pusa, Bihar (25°57'N and 85°40' E) to Pokhara (28°16' N and 83°58'E).

There is no reason to suppose at present that this range extension is a recent one. In fact, not enough data is available to assess whether this is indeed the case. In the event, it is an addition to the known fauna of Nepal and, since Pokhara is in central Nepal, the moth's presence east of Pokhara may be reasonably assumed, rather than believe that such a common and widespread moth exists in an isolated population in Pokhara.

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