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Board of Editors

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India
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Address for Correspondence

Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal,
Uttarakhand 263 136, India. Phone: +91
8938896403.

Email: butterflyresearchcentre@gmail.com

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SIGHTINGS OF THE TAILLESS LINEBLUE *PROSOTAS DUBIOSA* (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) IN DELHI, INDIA

RAJESH CHAUDHARY¹ AND CHANDRA BHUSAN MAURYA²

^{*1}*Department of Biomedical Science, Acharya NarendraDev College (University of Delhi), Govindpuri, Kalkaji, New Delhi -110 019*

rajeshchaudhary@andc.du.ac.in

²*958, Sector 3, R.K. Puram, New Delhi, 110022*

Reviewer: Piet van der Poel

The floristic composition of Delhi has changed significantly during past one and half centuries (Maheshwari, 1963; Anonymous, 1991). Several non-native plant species have been introduced for afforestation and beautification of gardens and parks (Maheshwari, 1963). In addition, the city has also witnessed an increased plantation of vegetable and fruit plants (Maheshwari, 1963). Factors such as change in floristic characteristics, appearance of new microhabitats, change in land use and climate change, alone or in combination can cause an alteration to the butterflies species diversity in a geographical area (Kwon *et al.*, 2021; Mukherjee *et al.*, 2019). For instance, in Delhi, a few species of butterflies, such as Common Jay (*Graphium doson* C. & R. Felder, 1864), Red Pierrot (*Talicauda nyseus* Guérin-Ménéville, 1843) and Plains Cupid (*Chilades pandava* Horsfield, 1829), that are fairly common at present, were not recorded by previous workers (Donahue, 1967; Larsen, 2002). These butterfly species are thought to have been introduced in Delhi during the last two decades along with their host plants, which have ornamental value. Also, species which were once considered extremely rare in Delhi such as the Common Lineblue (*Prosotas nora* C. Felder, 1860) and the Dark Cerulean (*Jamides bochus* Stoll, 1782) have been sighted more often during the last three years, and possibly breed (in the case of Dark Cerulean) in the city (Chaudhary *et al.*,

2019; 2020). Besides these, there is a recent record of the Common Grass Dart (*Taractrocerma maevius*) (Madan & Dey, 2018) that had not been reported previously from Delhi. In the present communication, we report sightings of the Tailless Lineblue (*Prosotas dubiosa*) from various parts of Delhi and its vicinity.

Two individuals of the Tailless Lineblue were sighted in the Sanjay Van area (28° 31' 48"N, 77° 10' 15"E) of South Delhi during the late morning on 2.x.2021 (Figure 1). Both the individuals were found puddling together on a footpath. These were observed for about 10 minutes and photographed. Another individual of this species was sighted and photographed on the morning of 13.x.2021, basking on a tree in the R. K. Puram area (28° 33' 20"N, 77° 10' 49"E) of New Delhi. It is noteworthy that this butterfly species was also sighted by us on 14.x. and 16.x.2021 (two individuals each day) in Aravalli Biodiversity Park, Gurugram, Haryana (28° 28' 56"N, 77° 06' 39"E). Therefore, it is likely that the Tailless Lineblue is present in other parts of Delhi-NCR as well.

To the best of our knowledge, the Tailless Lineblue has not been reported previously from Delhi (Donahue, 1967; Larsen, 2002) or its immediate vicinity. Thus, this butterfly is a new addition to the checklist of butterflies of Delhi.

The frequent sighting of Tailless Lineblue in Delhi and its immediate vicinity might be a case of occasional migration of this butterfly from the foothills of the Himalaya or Peninsular India. It would, however, be interesting to confirm whether this butterfly is attaining the status of a regular migrant to Delhi, or if it attains breeding status in the area.

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Fig.1: Tailless Lineblue (*Prosotas dubiosa*) photographed in Sanjay Van area of New Delhi, India.