

CONFIRMATION OF INDIAN OAKBLUE *ARHOPALA ATRAX* (HEWITSON, 1862) (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) FROM SOUTHERN UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA

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The Indian Oakblue *Arhopala atrax* (Hewitson, 1862) occurs in peninsular India as well as from Jammu & Kashmir to North East India (Varshney & Smetacek, 2015). According to Kehimkar (2016), it is found in Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar in addition to West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh in India. In addition to reporting this species from Maharashtra and Gujarat, Bhakare & Ogale (2018) also cited its occurrence in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Delhi has also reported on it. There is a gap between the populations of the species in peninsular India and the Himalayan foothills because the species had not been discovered on the Gangetic plain prior to the Delhi record. *Arhopala atrax* is mentioned in the current study for the first time coming from southern Uttar Pradesh in North India.

Arhopala atrax (Figure 1) was photographed by the author on July 28, 2022, at a height of 98 metres above sea level in the Prayagraj district of Uttar Pradesh (25.3481° N. 81.9535° E). With the use of literature, i.e. Kehimkar (2016), Bhakare & Ogale (2018), and Smetacek ([2016]), the butterfly was identified.

This is the first time *A. atrax* has been recorded from southern Uttar Pradesh. Sushmita *et al.*, (2022) reported this butterfly from Barabanki district which was the first specimen recorded for Uttar Pradesh, although Gasse (2018) had already shown its distribution in Dudhwa National Park in northern Uttar Pradesh.

Confirmation of this species in southern Uttar Pradesh suggests that the sub-Himalayan population and the continental populations are contiguous, via Lucknow and Prayagraj.

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Figure 1: *Arhopala atrax* in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh