

A REMARKABLY SMALL SPECIMEN OF *ABISARA BIFASCIATA* (LEPIDOPTERA: RIODINIDAE) FROM UTTARAKHAND, INDIA

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Abisara bifasciata Moore, 1877 is a widespread butterfly, which occurs from the central Western Ghats northwards to the Himalaya, northeast India and the Andaman Islands. It primarily resides in dense broadleaf forest at low elevation, with stragglers rarely ascending to 1500 m in the Himalaya.

In Manipur, the species was documented in Lailok (Lokchao Wildlife Sanctuary) at an altitude of 264 m, within a forest characterized by a combination of evergreen and deciduous tree species (Irungbam *et al.*, 2020)

Evans (1932) measured Indian butterflies and these measurements remain the standard for known size of species and subspecies. This measurement was obtained by measuring the butterfly from the centre of the thorax to the forewing apex and doubling the result, assuming bilateral symmetry. In the case of *A. bifasciata*, Evans (1932) treated 5 subspecies from the Indian subcontinent under the name *Abisara echerius* (Stoll, [1790]): *A. e. prunosa* Moore, 1879; *A. e. angulata* Moore, [1879]; *A. e. suffusa* Moore, 1882; *A. e. bifasciata* Moore. Bennett (1950) separated *A. bifasciata* and *A. echerius*, leaving *A. bifasciata angulata*, *A. b. suffusa* and *A. b. bifasciata* from the Indian subcontinent, while the taxa

prunosa and *paionea* Fruhstorfer, 1914 (treated by Evans (1932) under *Abisara kausambi* Felder & Felder, 1860) were treated under *A. echerius*.

For *A. bifasciata suffusa*, Evans (1932) gave a wingspan of 40-50 mm while *A. bifasciata bifasciata*, the wingspan was reported as 50-55 mm. Therefore, the established wingspan for *A. bifasciata*, at least on the Indian subcontinent, is 40-55 mm.

We present a notably small specimen of *A. bifasciata*, measured using Evans' (1932) method mentioned above, which adds to the known range of size of the species, illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Material examined: 1 ♂. Forewing length: 18 mm; Expanse: 38 mm. 16.viii.2023 Bhujiaghat (29°18.45'N' 79°31.41'E), 624 m above msl, Nainital district, Uttarakhand, India. Leg.: Peter Smetacek & Ambica Agnihotri. Coll. Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal.

Remarks: This unusually diminutive specimen contributes to our understanding of the wingspan range achievable by this species. Instead of the previously documented 40-55 mm, the known wingspan of this species is now revised to 38-55 mm.

References

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Figure 1. *Abisara bifasciata* male, Bhujiaghat, 16.viii.2023