

AN ADDITION TO THE BUTTERFLIES OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH: VEINED PALMER *HIDARI BHAWANI*

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Abstract: The Veined Palmer *Hidari bhawani* was only known to occur in Assam in India. In this note, we report its presence in Namdapha National Park & Tiger Reserve, Miao, Arunachal Pradesh. The record is however not surprising as Changlang district shares borders with Assam in the west and Myanmar in the south-east, where this species has been reported, but very rarely.

Introduction and Discussion

Arunachal Pradesh is the largest among the North-east Indian states and is located at the foothills of Eastern Himalaya. Namdapha National Park & Tiger Reserve (Namdapha NP & TR), located in the eastern Arunachal Pradesh, is one of the oldest and largest (1985 km²) protected areas and known for an exceptional biological diversity. Among the 700 butterfly species found in Arunachal Pradesh (Singh *et al.*, 2016), 410 of them have been recorded in Namdapha NP & TR (Society for Education & Environmental Development, 2020), which makes it a global butterfly diversity hotspot. Here we report the occurrence of the Veined Palmer *Hidari bhawani* from Namdapha NP & TR, an addition to the butterfly fauna of Arunachal Pradesh.

The genus *Hidari* Distant, 1886 comprises three species: *H. irava* (Moore, [1858]), *H.*

bhawani de Nicéville, [1889] and *H. doesoena* Martin, 1895. In India, only *H. bhawani* is found while the other two are found in South-east Asia. We recorded *H. bhawani* twice in Miao town of Changlang district which is a part of the Buffer Zone of Namdapha NP & TR. First, an adult was photographed at Miao Police Station (27°29'9.51"N 96°12'19.55"E) at 270 m amsl elevation on 27.ix.2019 (Fig. 1) and another adult was photographed at the Urban Shopping Complex, Miao (27°28'59.74"N 96°12'5.80"E) at 261 m amsl elevation on 19.ii.2021 (Fig. 2).

Previously, *H. bhawani* has been documented from the Koh Kong province, Cambodia (Chartier, 2019), Arakan Coast, Toungoo, Myanmar, Langkawi Island in Malaysia (Evans, 1949), Rayong Province, Thailand (Ek-Amnuay, 2012), Dong Nai Province, Vietnam (Inou S. & A. Kawazo, 1970) and

Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Tinsukia and Golaghat districts of Assam state, India (Evans, 1949; Norman, 1953; Singh, 2015). *H. bhawani* is rare in Thailand and very rare in Peninsular Malaysia and India (Chartier, 2019; Singh, 2015).

No reports of *H. bhawani* from Arunachal Pradesh were found in a thorough search of the cited literature. Though we did not find the early stages of the species, the time period between our two recent sightings (nearly 17 months) indicates that the species may have a stable resident population in Miao area, where host plants are abundant. However, it is worth noting that the Changlang district borders Assam in the west and Myanmar to the south-east (where this species has been reported, but very rarely), hence this additional report is not very surprising, especially considering the lack of research on Lepidoptera in and around eastern Arunachal Pradesh. Interestingly, these recent observations from Namdapha NP & TR represent an extension to the known distribution of *H. bhawani* to the north-east.

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Fig.1: *Hidari bhawani* de Nicéville, [1888]

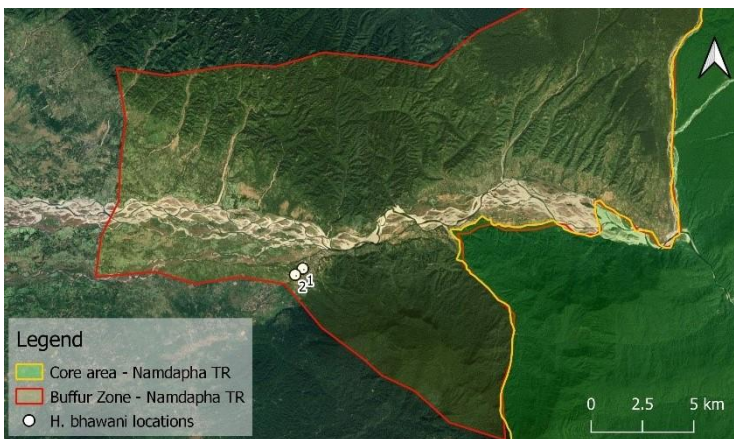


Fig.2: Recent sightings of *Hidari bhawani* at Namdapha National Park & Tiger Reserve