

CONFIRMATION OF THE COMMON EARL *TANAECIA JULII* (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) IN KUMAON, UTTARAKHAND, INDIA

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Reviewer: Peter Smetacek

The Common Earl *Tanaecia julii* (Lesson, 1837) is a widespread nymphalid butterfly which has been reported from Uttarakhand to North-East India (Varshney & Smetacek, 2015; Kehimkar, 2016), Malaysia, and Thailand (Lewis, 1973). Van der Poel & Smetacek (2022) reported the species in Central and Eastern Nepal, notably from the Eastern Terai, Gandaki, Pokhara, Bagmati and eastern Nepal, where it is very frequently met. It has so far not been recorded from western Nepal. It was reported from Uttarakhand by Hannyngham (1910) from river valleys in the extreme east, presumably the Kali river valley. Its reported range was extended westward on the basis of a single slightly damaged male specimen collected in Sattal, Bhimtal on 1. v.1963 (Figure 1) in the collection of the Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal.

On 10. vi.2022, at Askot, Pithoragarh (1150 m amsl), a single specimen was observed and photographed (Figure 2). It was perched on a fern and was observed for approximately three minutes. It was not identified in the field but several days later. It was not possible to revisit the site in that season to ascertain whether the specimen observed was a singleton or belonged to a breeding population. The species was reported from Uttarakhand on the basis of the single specimen depicted

in Figure 1. Despite relatively frequent observations during the past fifty years, it was never again observed in the Nainital district.

The current observation confirms the presence of the species in the Himalayas west of Nepal. However, it is uncertain whether the two specimens reported in the present paper belong to a breeding population or were stragglers. Igarashi & Fukuda (1997) report *Diploknema butyracea* as the larval host plant of this butterfly in India. This tree is indigenous and present at both the localities where *T. julii* is reported in the present paper. Thus, the possibility that both specimens recorded belong to small breeding populations of the species cannot be ruled out.

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Figure 1. Common Earl, Sattal 1.v.1963



Figure 2: *Tanaecia julii* photographed 10. vi.2022, at Askot, Pithoragarh (1150 m amsl) by Jagdish Bhatt.