

FIRST RECORD OF DESERT BATH WHITE BUTTERFLY *PONTIA GLAUCONOME* (KLUG, 1829) (LEPIDOPTERA: PIERIDAE) FROM RAJASTHAN, INDIA

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Abstract

The Desert Bath White butterfly *Pontia glauconome* is reported for the first time from Rajasthan, India.

Introduction

The Desert Bath White *Pontia glauconome* (Klug, 1829) is widely distributed across arid zones from Cape Verde, across northern Africa, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Chad, to the Arabian Peninsula, Israel, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and eastwards to Afghanistan, Pakistan, northern India, and northwards into Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (Winhard, 2000, van Gasse, 2013, Varshney & Smetacek, 2015, John *et al.* 2020).

Observation

The authors conducted a four-day (20.x.2021 to 23.x.2021) opportunistic field visit at Desert National Park, Rajasthan, India. A single individual was observed perching on a wild desert plant around 5.45 P.M. (GMT+5.30) at the coordinates of 26°49' N and 70°30' E. SM photographed the butterfly using a Nikon D500 camera with Nikkor 200-500mm f/5.6 ED VR lens on 20.x.2021. SB confirmed the species as *Pontia glauconome* (Klug, 1829) using Evans (1932). The species was sighted once at the mentioned location. The authors did not observe it during subsequent field visits in the same area.

Discussion

The location is a part of the Great Thar Desert, with an arid and subtropical climate. The area receives an annual rainfall of 100-500 mm with extreme seasonal temperature fluctuations, such as from 50° C in summer to near freezing in winter (Sharma & Mehra, 2009). *Pontia glauconome* is a desert and semi-desert species that thrives in dry and arid climatic areas (Winhard, 2000). The underside of the species is similar to *Pontia daplidice*. However, it differs in the forewing apical and marginal region, which is traversed by short white lines extending to the margin and is faintly lined with yellow. Considerably restricted green coloration of the hindwings, a dusky cell basal area with large white pyriform spots in the cell and interspace 7 are some characteristic features of *Pontia glauconome* (Bingham, 1907).

Conclusion

The current record from the Great Thar Desert establishes the presence of this species in Rajasthan, India. The species has been recorded from Baluchistan, Karachi, Chitral and Punjab in Pakistan, so the occurrence of this species is not highly unexpected (Winhard, 2000).

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Fig.1: *Pontia glauconome* from Desert National Park, Rajasthan, India