

EVIDENCE OF BREEDING OF *JAMIDES BOCHUS* (STOLL, [1782]) (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) IN NEW DELHI, INDIA

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The butterfly Dark Cerulean (*Jamides bochus*) was first recorded in Delhi by Larsen in 1985, who considered it a case of migration (Larsen, 2002). It was also reported from Delhi in the late 1990s (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2019, Dr. Surya Prakash, *pers. comm.*). The sighting of Dark Cerulean however has become quite frequent in Delhi during the last five years, with several sightings between July to March every year (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2020, Rajesh Chaudhary unpublished records). It was also found laying eggs on its host plant *Millettia pinnata* (L.) Panigrahi (Fabaceae) in Delhi on one occasion in the year 2020, indicating that it might have extended its breeding range towards drier parts of North-west India (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2020).

In the present communication, we report additional supporting evidence which strengthens our assertion that the recent sighting records of Dark Cerulean in Delhi are members of a breeding population rather than of migrants.

An individual of Dark Cerulean butterfly was spotted hopping on the ground in a residential area of South Delhi (28° 32 '22" N, 77° 15' 46" E) on 31.viii.2022, close to its host plant *Millettia pinnata* (Figure 1). On close examination, it was found that

both the wings on one side of the butterfly were malformed (Figure 1). The butterfly was also found to be freshly eclosed. It could barely fly 1-2 meters at a time.

The above observations indicate that this individual of Dark Cerulean eclosed with malformed wings in the area where it was spotted. Therefore, it is additional evidence which affirms the breeding status of Dark Cerulean in Delhi.

REFERENCES

- Chaudhary, R. & V. Kumar. 2019. Sightings of *Jamides bochus* (Stoll, [1782]) and *Prosotas nora* (C. Felder, 1860) (Insecta: Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) from urbanized parts of New Delhi. *Bionotes* 21 (1): 3-4.
- Chaudhary, R. & V. Kumar. 2020. Oviposition by *Jamides bochus* (Stoll, [1782]) (Insecta: Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) in New Delhi, India. *Bionotes* 22 (3): 157.
- Larsen, T.B. 2002. The butterflies of Delhi, India-an annotated check-list. *Esperiana* 9: 459-479.



Figure 1: Dark Cerulean *Jamides bochus*; (A) side view with normal wings; (B) another side view of the same individual with both the wings malformed; (C) view from rear of the individual.