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# BIONOTES

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Research Centre, Bhimtal, India  
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Please E-mail to [editorbionotes@gmail.com](mailto:editorbionotes@gmail.com)

Bandana Subedi (Assistant Editor)  
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[bandanasubedi84@gmail.com](mailto:bandanasubedi84@gmail.com)

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[vvrento@gmail.com](mailto:vvrento@gmail.com)

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[sn@saturniidae.com](mailto:sn@saturniidae.com)

## **Address for Correspondence**

Jatishwor Irungbam, Institute of  
Microbiology, CAS, Centrum  
ALGATECH, Novohradská 237 -  
Opatovický mlýn 379 01 Třeboň,  
Czech Republic  
[jatishworirungbam@gmail.com](mailto:jatishworirungbam@gmail.com)

Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal,  
Uttarakhand 263 136, India. Phone: +91  
8938896403.  
Email: [editorbionotes@gmail.com](mailto:editorbionotes@gmail.com)

Devanshu Gupta, Zoological Survey of India,  
Kolkata, India [devanshuguptagb4102@gmail.com](mailto:devanshuguptagb4102@gmail.com)

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## RANGE EXTENSION OF *TARUCUS HAZARA* (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) TO UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA

SUSHMITA PRAKASH\*, BABITA SHARMA & ASHOK KUMAR

Department of Zoology, B.S.N.V P.G. College, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

\*Corresponding author: [sushmitawildlife@gmail.com](mailto:sushmitawildlife@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

The Hazara Pierrot (*Tarucus hazara*) has been recorded for the first time in the district Barabanki of Uttar Pradesh, India. This sighting confirms the extension of the known distribution of this Lycaenid species eastwards to Uttar Pradesh, India.

### INTRODUCTION

The Hazara Pierrot, *Tarucus hazara* Evans, 1932 (Insecta: Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) is a small Blue Pierrot butterfly belonging to the genus *Tarucus* (Moore, 1881). Evans (1932) initially classified *T. hazara* as a subspecies of Himalayan Pierrot, *T. venosus* Moore, 1882. However, Evans (1955) stated that further examination revealed it to be a distinct species with unique male genitalia, rather than a subspecies of *T. venosus*. Tshikolovets & Pagès (2016) considered *T. hazara* to be a synonym of *T. venosus* without acknowledging or addressing Evans' discovery from 1955.

The species is found in a wide range of habitats, including open dry areas and mid-elevation deciduous vegetation. It can be found in the foothills up to 2,500 m in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and north-western Punjab (Attock region

and Murree), as well as in India, including Kashmir (Varshney & Smetacek, 2015), northern Punjab (Chandigarh), and western Uttarakhand (Garhwal) (van Gasse (2021); Basu *et al.* (2019)).

### MATERIAL & METHODOLOGY

Identifying members of *Tarucus* solely based on the wing patterns and markings is quite challenging. Therefore, it is important to examine their male genitalia for proper identification. Specimens from various locations in the Barabanki district (Tehsil Ramsanehi Ghat and Ram Nagar) were collected using a butterfly net.

The specimens collected were pinned following the standard protocol (Robinson, 1976). The abdomens of male specimens were soaked overnight in a 20% KOH solution before being dissected the next morning in 20% ethanol under a binocular microscope for genitalia examination. Images of the genitalia were captured using a 3.5X to 90X zoom trinocular stereo microscope.

On 4.x.2021, a single male of *T. hazara* was recorded from the outskirts of Ramsanehi Ghat, Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh (N 26° 51' 20.2" E 081° 31' 43.8"). After the detailed examination of wing patterns

and genitalia the specimen was identified and confirmed as *Tarucus hazara*. The specimen of *T. hazara* is deposited in the collection of the Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal, Uttarakhand, India.

## DISCUSSION

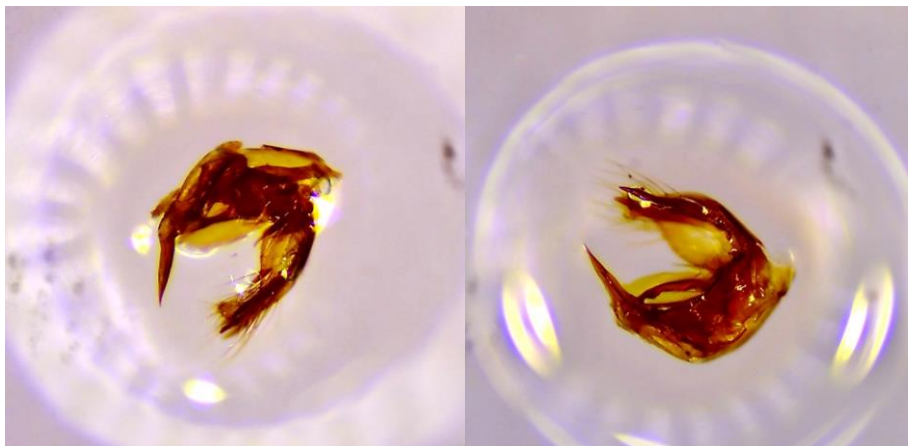
The present record is a major range extension to the known distribution of the taxon *T. hazara*, which was previously reported from Kashmir, Punjab & Uttarakhand. The presence of *Ziziphus mummularia* in Barabanki confirms the availability of its host plant.

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**Figure 1:** Upperside & Underside of *Tarucus hazara*



**Figure 2:** Genital Capsule of *Tarucus hazara*