

**EDITORIAL: REGARDING A CASE OF PLAGIARISM****PETER SMETACEK***Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal  
Uttarakhand, India 263 136*

Publication of the December 2020 issue of BIONOTES was delayed due to several reasons. It was eventually published on February 13, 2021 but immediately withdrawn. The reason was that in that issue, we carried a note titled, "First confirmed record of Crimson Rose *Pachliopta hector* (Linnaeus, 1758) from Chilla, Rajaji Tiger Reserve, Garhwal Zone, Uttarakhand" by Shankar Kumar, Vineet Bahuguna, Param Jit Singh and Devanshi Singh. This note reported the presence of this butterfly outside the Garhwal Mandal Nigam Resthouse, where it was photographed by Mrs. Saroj Kukreti, Manager, Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam guesthouse, Chilla.

The purported photograph was sent to Mr. Param Jit Singh by Vineet Bahuguna, senior management consultant with the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam, for identification. They claimed to have seen this butterfly near the guest house and photographed it. Recognizing that this was a new record for Garhwal, Mr. Param Jit Singh and Devanshi Singh visited the area twice to try and obtain further evidence of this species in the area. On one occasion, they were accompanied by Vineet Bahuguna. Needless to say, they were unable to locate this butterfly.

Mr. Param Jit Singh asked Saroj Kukreti for the original photo, which she claimed to have taken but she stated that she had accidentally deleted it.

Mr. Param Jit Singh, Dr. Shankar Kumar and Devanshi Singh therefore relied upon the observation by Vineet Bahuguna and Saroj Kukreti, wrote the abovementioned note and submitted it for publication in BIONOTES.

I reviewed the note and since I have a record of a specimen of *Pachliopta hector* collected in Naukuchiatal on 15.iv.1949, and I have seen a specimen of this butterfly near Dehra Dun but did not report it because of lack of evidence, I trusted the report and recommended publication.

As soon as it was published, Mr. Gaurav Joshi, Haldwani, Uttarakhand, pointed out that the photograph was his, taken with a cell phone camera on 31.i.2016 at 10.39 am at Gingee Fort in Tamil Nadu. He had uploaded it on Facebook on a forum called Uttarakhand Photography Club on 16.v.2018 at 7.45 pm. He has since then submitted the series of original photographs to me, whose data confirms what is stated above.

This is therefore an open and shut case of plagiarism and scientific fraud by Vineet Bahuguna and Saroj Kukreti. The note was withdrawn.

The BIONOTES team requests contributors to kindly confirm any records submitted to them, even if the people belong to normally respectable organizations like the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam. We also strongly condemn the contemptible action by Vineet Bahuguna and Saroj Kukreti.



Fig.1: Gaurav Joshi's post in Facebook as mentioned in text.