

REDISCOVERY OF THE ASSAM FLASH BUTTERFLY *RAPALA TARA* (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) FROM UTTARAKHAND, INDIA

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Introduction

The type-localities of the Assam Flash *Rapala tara* de Nicéville [1889] were Sylhet (Bangladesh) and Nainital district in Uttarakhand. The specimens from Uttarakhand are two females collected by Colonel A.M. Lang. They were collected at Nainital (1524 m) and Nalena (1280 m) near Nainital in September 1887. Since the lake of Nainital is at around 1800 m, the first record was probably between Nalena and Nainital and not actually in Nainital. Hannynghton (1910) described the status of this butterfly as 'rare' at Nalena and Nainital. This was the last published record of the Assam Flash from Uttarakhand.

Observation

On 12.viii.2020, a female Assam Flash was sighted and photographed at Khansyun, (29°17'35.6N"; 79°45'07.7"E)

(987m) a rural settlement situated in a river valley in the Okhalkanda Development Block of Nainital District. The butterfly was perched on a wild mint (*Mentha arvensis*) bush. Other butterfly species were also observed sipping nectar from wild mint florets in the same area along the river Gaula. This sighting of the Assam Flash confirms its continued presence in Uttarakhand after a century.

References

Hannynghton, F. 1910. The butterflies of Kumaon. Parts I & II. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 20: 130-142; 361- 372.
Varshney, R.K. & P. Smetacek (eds.). 2015. *A Synoptic Catalogue of the Butterflies of India*. Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal & Indinov Publishing, New Delhi, ii + 261 pp., 8 pls.



Fig.1: Map of study area



Fig.2: *Rapala tara*