

FIRST RECORD OF THE INDIAN OAKBLUE *ARHOPALA ATRAX* (HEWITSON 1862) (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) FROM UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA

SUSHMITA^{1*}, BABITA SHARMA² AND ASHOK KUMAR³

^{1*, 2 & 3} Department of Zoology, B.S.N.V P.G College, (University of Lucknow), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

Corresponding author: sushmitawildlife@gmail.com

Reviewer: P. Smetacek

INTRODUCTION

Varshney & Smetacek (2015) reported the Indian Oakblue *Arhopala atrax* (Hewitson, 1862) from peninsular India; Jammu & Kashmir to North East India; Kehimkar (2016) reported its distribution as “India (W. Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal-Arunachal, North East India), Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar”. Bhakare & Ogale (2018) report it from Maharashtra and Gujarat but mention its presence in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, too. It is also reported from Delhi. Except for the Delhi record, the species had not been recorded on the Gangetic plain, leaving a gap between the peninsular Indian and Himalayan populations of the species.

In the present study, *A. atrax* is reported for the first time from Uttar Pradesh, North India, on the basis of a single specimen collected from Barabanki district.

METHODOLOGY

On 16th August 2021, a single male specimen of *A. atrax* was photographed and collected (figures 1,2 & 3) from Lalpur Guman of Ram Nagar region, district Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh, (26°51'28.4"N 81°31'34.8"E), 123m above

sea level. The photograph was identified using Kehimkar (2016), Bhakare & Ogale (2018) & Smetacek ([2016]). The collected specimen is deposited in the collection of the Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal, Uttarakhand, India.

DISCUSSION

This is the first time that *A. atrax* was recorded from Uttar Pradesh. The present finding bridges the existing distribution gap of the species to include Uttar Pradesh, which is adjacent to Delhi to the west, Madhya Pradesh to the south and the sub-Himalayan tract of Uttarakhand and Nepal to the north.

CONCLUSION

There is no previous record of *A. atrax* from Uttar Pradesh, India. Since it is recorded from Delhi, Madhya Pradesh & Uttarakhand, it was expected from the neighbouring state, Uttar Pradesh and the present report is a confirmatory record rather than a notable range extension.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors are highly thankful to the PCCF Wildlife Mr Pawan Kumar Sharma and the DFO of Barabanki, Mr N.K.

Singh. The authors are also grateful to the entire staff of the Forest Department of Ram Nagar Range for helping in the fieldwork. All authors express their immense gratitude to their family and friends for their kind support and encouragement.

REFERENCES

Bhakare M. & H. Ogale. 2018. *A guide to Butterflies of Western Ghats (India) includes Butterflies of Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat state*. x + 496 pp. Privately published by the authors, Satara & Sindhudurg.

Kehimkar, I. 2016. *Butterflies of India*. Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai. xii + 528 pp..

Smetacek, P. [2016]. *A Naturalist's Guide to the Butterflies of India*. John Beaufoy Publishing, Oxford. 176 pp.

Varshney, R. K. & P. Smetacek (eds.). 2015. *A Synoptic Catalogue of the Butterflies of India*. Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal and Indinov Publishing, New Delhi. ii + 261 pp., 8 pl.



Fig 1: Collected male specimen of *Arhopala atrax* from Barabanki district.



Fig 2: Collected male specimen of *Arhopala atrax* from Barabanki district.



Fig 3: Photographic evidence of *Arhopala atrax* in situ, Barabanki district