

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ZEBRA SKIPPER *ERNSTA ZEBRA* (LEPIDOPTERA: HESPERIIDAE) IN THE WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES OF RAJASTHAN

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Ernstia zebra (Butler, 1888) was described from Attock (= Campbellpore) and the Kala Chitta Range (=Chittar Pahar), Pakistan (Butler, 1888; de Niceville, 1889). For over a century, these were the only known localities for this elusive butterfly. Tshikolovets & Pages (2016) added the Margalla Hills to the two known localities, which appeared to be an extremely local species, occurring in a limited area in present day northern Pakistan. Recently, it was recorded for the first time in India from Sagwara, Dungarpur Dist., Rajasthan (Panwar, 2020). After the first sighting, opportunistic surveys were conducted between 2015 and 2021 in selected wildlife sanctuaries (WLS) of Rajasthan.

During the surveys, there were 17 records of the Zebra Skipper in eight wildlife sanctuaries (Table 1).

The present paper confirms that this butterfly is, in fact, quite widespread. Although at present it is known from two rather widely separated localities, namely northern Pakistan and Rajasthan, it is likely that future workers will manage to show that there are populations connecting these two areas and the butterfly is rather more widespread than presently believed.

It is a small butterfly which flies low among bushes and on the wing is identical to *Spialia galba* (Fabricius, 1793). This is probably the reason why it has been overlooked by previous workers.

Table 1: Location of the Zebra Skipper in some Wildlife Sanctuaries of Rajasthan.

Sighting No.	Wildlife Sanctuary	District	Date	GPS Co-ordinates
1.	Phulwari ki Nal WLS	Udaipur	09-08-2015	24°16'42"N 73°15'12"E
2.			31-03-2018	24°14'40"N 73°17'09"E
3.	Sita Mata WLS	Pratapgarh and Chittaurgarh	17-05-2015	24°13'25"N 74°25'55"E
4.			15-03-2020	24°17'03"N 74°29'53"E
5.	Kumbhalgarh	Rajsamand	01-11-2020	25°05'18"N 73°27'37"E

6.	WLS		20-03-2021	25°05'24"N 73°27'36"E
7.			02-12-2022	25°05'12"N 73°27'34"E
8.	Todgarh Raoli WLS	Ajmer, Pali and Rajsamand	23-10-2019	25°28'35"N 73°52'15"E
9.			21-03-2021	25°42'48"N 73°56'34"E
10.	Bassi WLS	Chittorgarh	10-11-2018	25°01'39"N 74°48'43"E
11.	Sajjanganrh WLS	Udaipur	04-03-2015	24°35'49"N 73°38'16"E
12.			14-08-2016	24°35'44"N 73°38'22"E
13.			26-08-2019	24°36'01"N 73°38'27"E
14.	Jaisamand WLS	Udaipur	03-08-2017	24°16'22"N 73°52'44"E
15.			13-09-2019	24°16'25"N 73°52'46"E
16.			27-08-2021	24°16'15"N 73°52'38"E
17.	Mount Abu WLS	Sirohi	26-05-2019	24°36'44"N 74°40'10"E

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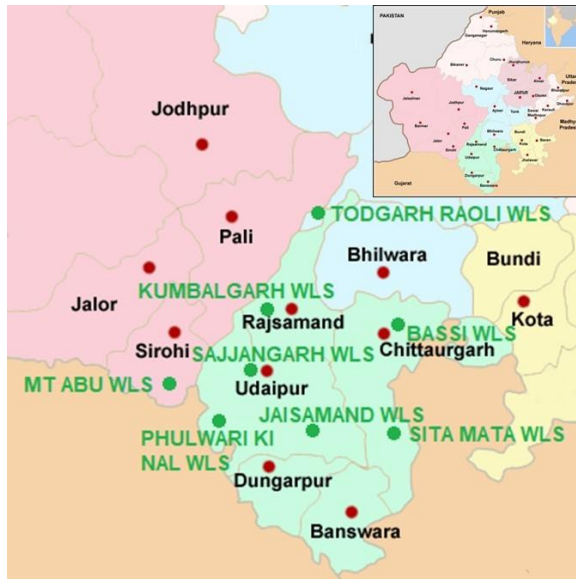


Figure 1: Locations of Wildlife Sanctuaries where *Ernstia zebra* has been recorded