

FIRST RECORD OF *AZANUS UBALDUS* (STOLL, 1782) (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) FROM JHARKHAND, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper confirms the presence of *Azanus ubaldus* (Stoll, 1782) in Jharkhand with photographic documentation.

KEYWORDS Butterfly, First Record, Hazaribagh

INTRODUCTION

Azanus ubaldus (Stoll, 1782) also known as Bright Babul Blue, is a small species of butterfly belonging to the Lycaenidae family. It is found all over India except North East Indian States (Varshney & Smetacek, 2015). Apart from India, it has also been reported from Pakistan, Bhutan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka (Kehimkar, 2016).

It is a resident of arid and semiarid zones with larger stocks of *Acacia* (Schurian, 2016). The flight is strong and continuous, mostly during the months of March–November (Singh, 2010).

During a field study, specimens of *A. ubaldus* were photographed twice by the authors from Hazaribagh town in

Hazaribagh district, Jharkhand, India using a Samsung SM-A207F and Realme Narzo RMX2050 camera.

OBSERVATION

The species was first photographed near Hazaribagh Bypass Road (24.021786°N; 85.387961°E) of Hazaribagh town on 25.vi.2022 at 9:26 am. At the time of observation, the butterfly was hiding under a leaf on the ground. The butterfly was seen again and photographed on 1.viii.2022 at 10:35 am, 50 metres North-West from the previous sighted place. At that time, it was flying rapidly around and inside the crowns of Babul trees (*Acacia nilotica*). Specimens were not captured and thus not collected from the study area.

DISCUSSION

The butterfly was identified based on tailless hindwing, male with bright violet blue upperside and black border; female with pale blue upperside and broad brown border, lacks a spot in the cell on under forewing, underneath with two black

tornal spots, two black costal spots and a pale brown, white-edged band (Kehimkar, 2016; Singh, 2011). The study area is a dry deciduous forest that has an elevation of 592 m and was surrounded by *Shorea robusta*, *Madhuca longifera*, *Buchanania lanzan*, *Acacia nilotica*, *Senna sophora*, *Lantana camara* and *Clerodendron infortunatum*.

CONCLUSION

A. ubaldus was hitherto not reported from Jharkhand (Verma, 2009; Singh, 2010; Patra *et al.*, 2022). Although it has been recorded earlier from the neighbouring states of West Bengal (Mukherjee *et al.*, 2020), Bihar (Karthik *et al.*, 2020), Chhattisgarh (Sisodia, 2019) and Odisha (Mahata & Palita, 2022). Based on photographic evidence we confirm the presence of *A. ubaldus* in Jharkhand.

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Figure 1: 1st Photograph of Bright Babul Blue taken by the Authors

Figure 2: 2nd Photograph of Bright Babul Blue

Figure 3: Map of the study area where 1st Bright Babul Blue (*Azanus ubaldus*) was sighted