

WESTERNMOST RECORD OF *MILETUS CHINENSIS* (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) FROM JEOLIKOTE, UTTARAKHAND, INDIA

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The genus *Miletus* Huebner, [1819] is represented by 2 species in India, *M. chinensis* C. Felder, 1862 and *M. symethus* (Cramer, 1777). *M. chinensis* occurs in the foothills of the Himalaya from Uttarakhand to Assam and in Manipur (Varshney & Smetacek, 2015). Although it is a low elevation species, it has been reported at 1500 m near Bhimtal in Uttarakhand (Smetacek, 2012).

In the third week of September, 2020, some rapidly flying, unidentified Lepidoptera were observed near the Range Forest Office in Gaja Forest Research Nursery, Jeolikote, Uttarakhand (29°21'05.3"N; 79°28'38.2"E, 1200 m elevation) at dusk. It was not possible to photograph them, since they did not settle. Two specimens were taken and identified at the Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal, as *M. chinensis*. The specimens have been deposited in the collection of the Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal.

Miletus chinensis assamensis (Doherty, 1891) (Figure 1)

Expanse: 32-38 mm (Evans, 1932)

Material examined: 2 ♂♂: Expanse: 32-34 mm; 20.ix.2020, Gaja Forest Research Nursery, Jeolikote, Nainital district, 1200

m. Leg.: A. Agnihotri. Coll.: Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal.

DISTRIBUTION

Uttarakhand to Assam, Manipur.

REMARKS

Smetacek (2012) reported this species from Jones Estate (29°33'98"N; 79°58'78"E), near Bhimtal, which is the westernmost published record for the taxon. Jeolikote lies still further west of Jones Estate (roughly 8 km as the crow flies) and therefore the current records represent the westernmost records for this species.

M. chinensis feeds on aphids in the larval stage and occurs sporadically when there is an outbreak of aphids on plants. Chemical control of aphids is disastrous for this species. This might explain why it is so uncommon in the present century when potent insecticides are routinely sprayed over large tracts of land.

REFERENCES

Evans, W.H. 1932. *The identification of Indian butterflies*. 2nd ed. Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay. x+454 pp., 32 pl.

Smetacek, P. 2012. Butterflies (Lepidoptera: Papilionoidea and Hesperioidea) and other protected fauna of Jones Estate, a dying watershed in the Kumaon Himalaya, Uttarakhand, India. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 4(9):2857-2874.

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Figure 1: *Miletus chinensis* Gaja, Jeolikote 20.ix.2020