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FIRST RECORD OF TAILLESS PLUSHBLUE *FLOS ARESTE* (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) FROM WESTERN HIMALAYA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The present communication deals with the first record of Tailless Plushblue *Flos areste* (Hewitson, 1862) from western Himalaya, Uttarakhand, India. The information regarding its occurrence will be helpful in updating the range distribution of butterflies in the northwest Himalaya.

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Flos* Doherty, 1889 (Lycaenidae) is distributed in the Indomalayan ecozone (Seitz 1912–1927). The butterfly species belonging to this genus are commonly known as Plushblues. Out of the 14 species in this genus, eight are known from India (Varshney & Smetacek, 2015). The four species e.g., *F. adriana* (de Niceville, 1883), *F. fulgida* (Hewitson, 1863), *F. asoka* (de Niceville, 1883) and *F. chinensis* (C. & R. Felder, [1865]) have

their distribution in western Himalaya (Smetacek, 2011; Venkatesh, 2016, Kumar *et al.*, 2020). It is noteworthy to mention here that all four species including *F. areste* have also been recorded from the central Himalaya of Nepal (Smith, 1994). P.V. Gasse (2013) listed it as “Rare” from central Nepal to Arunachal, northeast India (Khasi Hills, Nagaland, and Manipur), and Burma to Ataran. This species has been documented most recently from Sikkim to northeast India by Varshney & Smetacek (2015).

OBSERVATIONS

During an opportunistic survey a single individual of *Flos areste* (Fig. 1) was observed at 1303 hours on 15.xi.2023 at Kaphali Kamer, near Saung village (30.019 N, 79.936 E), altitude 1580 m, district Bageshwar, Uttarakhand (Fig. 2). The study area contains mixed dense forest

dominated by Oak species. Various notable species of butterflies have been recorded during the survey e.g., *Flos chinensis*, *Arhopala bazalus*, *Lethe dura*, *Lethe nicetas* etc.

The discovery of *F. areste* indicates that remote areas of the central Himalayas are rich in biodiversity, and it is the need of the hour that they should be surveyed thoroughly regarding butterfly diversity.



Fig. 01: *Flos areste* photographed at Bageshwar, Uttarakhand.

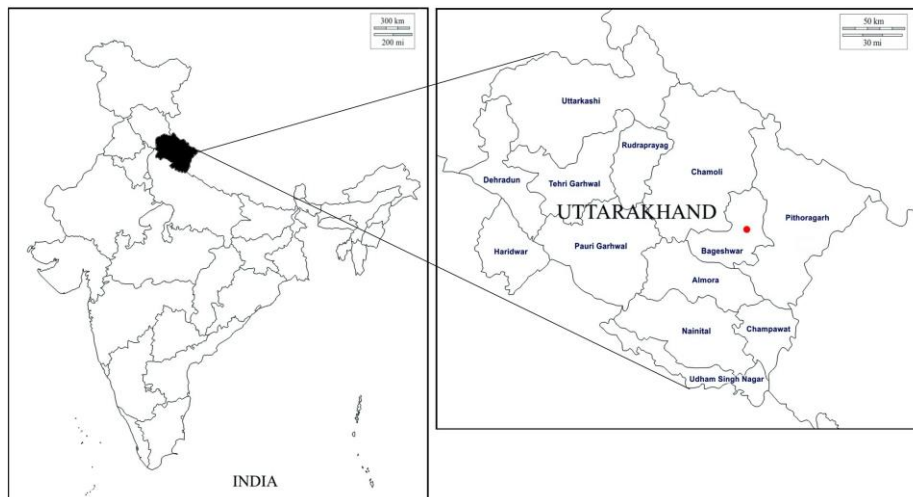


Fig. 02: Red dot shows the site where *Flos areste* was recorded.

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