

## A NEW ALTITUDINAL RECORD FOR *PORITIA HEWITSONI* (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) FROM UTTARAKHAND, INDIA

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### Introduction

The Common Gem butterfly, *Poritia hewitsoni* Moore (1866) (Poritiinae: Lycaenidae), is endemic to the Oriental (Indo-Australian) region. Its distribution extends from Uttarakhand in northern India in the west, to north Thailand in the east, through the lower Himalayan tracts in Nepal, Sikkim, W. Bengal (Darjeeling), Bhutan up to parts of northeast India, south-east Bangladesh (Chittagong hill tracts) and north Myanmar (Evans, 1932; Singh, 2003; Ek-Amnuay, 2012).

### Observation

One butterfly, probably a male, was observed at 9.06 am on 28.ix.2020 basking at an altitude of 1770-80 msl (29°50'00"N; 74°41'34" E) in a chir pine forest (*Pinus roxburghii*) with thick undergrowth of grasses and shrubs close to a resort in Gunnu area near Lansdowne, Uttarakhand. The individual was observed for more than 5 minutes and the underside of the wings were photographed with a digital Nikon P 900 camera after the butterfly settled on foliage. It did not open its wing to bask, therefore it was not possible to photograph the upperside of the wings. The butterfly kept sitting for a long time even after being photographed.

### Discussion

*P. hewitsoni* occurs in lower midlands from 160 m to 1050 m as a locally abundant, fairly common species found at all seasons (Smith,

2006; Singh, 2003). The species has been recorded at low elevation, with stragglers ascending the Himalaya to 1500 msl. (Smetacek, 2016). The current sighting confirms that this species can ascend up to 1780 m. It appears to have been a straggler, since no other specimens were observed.

### References

- Ek-Amnuay, P. 2012. *Butterflies of Thailand*. 2nd ed., Revised. Baan Lae Suan Amarin Printing, Bangkok. 943 pp.
- Smetacek, P. 2016. A Naturalist's Guide to the Butterflies of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, Prakash Books, India, 64
- Smith, C. 2006. Illustrated Checklist of Nepal's Butterflies. Walden Bookhouse, Kathmandu. 129 pp.
- Singh, A.P. 2003. New records on the distribution and ecology of Common Gem Butterfly, *Portia hewitsoni hewitsoni* Moore from the lower western Himalayas: lesser known taxa. *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 37(4): 295–298.
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Fig.1: *Poritia hewitsoni*