

FIRST RECORD OF JOKER BUTTERFLY *BYBLIA ILITHYIA* (INSECTA: LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) FROM PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Joker Butterfly *Byblia ilithyia* is reported for the first time from Pakistan.

Introduction

The Joker or Spotted Joker *Byblia ilithyia* (Drury, [1773]) is a widespread nymphalid butterfly, found in sub-Saharan Africa, eastwards through the Arabian peninsula to India. In Africa, it is distributed from Senegal in the west, southwards to South Africa and eastwards to Ethiopia (African Butterfly Database, 2020). It is absent in Madagascar. In the Middle East, Belletto & Larsen (1985) reported it from Dhofar in Oman, where it is common and Ju-Amlah, near Sa'dah, in Yemen, where it is very rare. There is no record from Iran (Naderi, 2019) and it was not reported from Pakistan by Tshikolovets & Pages (2016). In South Asia, it occurs in north-western and south-eastern parts of Sri Lanka and in peninsular India from Tamil Nadu northwards to Gujarat and north-eastwards to Chhattisgarh (Varshney & Smetacek, 2015).

Methodology

After a good monsoon, on 24th September 2019 the second author WN photographed a butterfly with his cellphone camera (Oppo F5 Youth) in the Karoonjhar mountain range (24°20'26"N 70°44'0"E), Tehsil Nagar Parkar, District Tharparkar, Sindh province, Pakistan. The first author identified it as *Byblia ilithyia*. On the second occasion, the third author, DP

videographed and photographed several individuals of the same species with his Apple Iphone 6s on 4th November 2019 from the same locality.

Discussion

This is the first record of *B. ilithyia* from Sindh province as well as from Pakistan. The Karoonjhar mountains are situated on the northern edge of the Rann of Kutch. They consist of granite rocks and are considered an outlying mass of the crystalline rocks of the Aravalli range. The climate of this mountain range is extreme due to rocky terrain and lack of vegetation. August and September are the only cool months due to monsoon rains (Wikipedia, 2020). *B. ilithyia* inhabits dry regions (Smetacek, 2016). Therefore, it seems to be a resident of the area, not a post-monsoon straggler. The records from September and November suggest a long emergence period of a single brood of the butterfly or else there are at least two annual generations in the area.

Conclusion

Tshikolovets & Pages (2016) did not report this species nor did they include it in the appendix of species likely to occur in Pakistan. Since it has been recorded from Rajkot and Kutch districts of the neighbouring Indian state of Gujarat (Bakos *et al.*, 2020), it was expected from border districts like Tharparkar and Badin of Sindh province, Pakistan. More new records for Pakistan can be obtained from

this region if proper exploration is carried out. This is 442nd butterfly species recorded from Pakistan after Awan & Hassan (2019).

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Fig.1: *Byblia ilithyia* ventral view

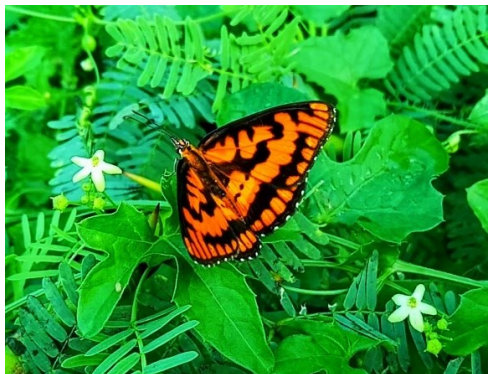


Fig.2: *Byblia ilithyia* dorsal view