

TRIPLOPOGON RAMOSISSIMUS (POACEAE) AS THE FIRST LARVAL HOST PLANT FOR THE VINDHYAN BOB BUTTERFLY *ARNETTA VINDHIANA* (MOORE, [1884]) FROM INDIA

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The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) Nature Reserve is a forested area spread over 33 acres and is nestled between Dadasaheb Phalke Chitra Nagari (aka Film City) and Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Mumbai City of Maharashtra, India. The Reserve also has a small butterfly garden spread over an area of around quarter of an acre.

We searched for and collected butterfly larvae on *Triplopogon ramosissimus* (Family: Poaceae) grass patches in the months of July and August 2021 in the BNHS Nature Reserve. This is a tall grass species which is seen along a stream in the Reserve. These larvae were reared in transparent boxes on a diet of fresh leaves of *Triplopogon ramosissimus*. These were seen actively feeding on the leaves in such a way that only the mid-rib was not eaten. The frass was cleaned every day from the rearing boxes and fresh leaves added.

The larvae pupated in leaf folds after stitching the leaf margins with silk threads. From all these pupae adult Vindhyan Bob butterflies *Arnetta vindhiana* (Moore,

[1884]) (Insecta: Lepidoptera: Hesperidae) eclosed within 7 to 8 days. Eight *A.vindhiana* caterpillars were reared on the diet of *Triplopogon ramosissimus* leaves. *A. vindhiana* was seen laying eggs on *Triplopogon ramosissimus* grass on 3 August 2021 and an egg was photographed. Mating of two adults was seen on the same day near the *Triplopogon ramosissimus* grass patch (see Images). Vindhya Bob is a common butterfly species found in Western and Central India, across Rajasthan to Kerala and Madhya Pradesh (Varshney & Smetacek, 2015).

Nitin et al. (2018) mentioned Poaceae as the preferred family for larval food plant. No specific larval host plant has been reported for Vindhyan Bob in published literature mentioned below (Wynter-Blyth, 1957; Nitin et al. 2018) or on the websites (Robinson et al., 2022; Valappil et al. 2021). Thus, this is the first confirmed larval host plant recorded for *A. vindhiana* from India.

Table: Data on rearing of larvae of *A. vindhiana*

Larva collected	Pupation date	Eclosion date
29 July 2021	12 August 2021	20 August 2021
29 July 2021	8 August 2021	Caterpillar died
29 July 2021	2 August 2021	9 August 2021
29 July 2021	2 August 2021	10 August 2021
29 July 2021	5 August 2021	12 August 2021
29 July 2021	2 August 2021	9 August 2021
29 July 2021	2 August 2021	8 August 2021
3 August 2021	8 August 2021	15 August 2021

Hernández. 2010. HOSTS - A Database of the World's Lepidopteran Hostplants.

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