

EXTENSION OF THE KNOWN DISTRIBUTION OF THE VAGRANT BUTTERFLY *VAGRANS EGISTA* (CRAMER, [1780])(LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) TO BASTAR, CHHATTISGARH

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Introduction

Within India, *Vagrans egista* (Cramer, [1780]), is known from Uttarakhand to North East India; Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal (Varshney & Smetacek, 2015). Kehimkar (2008) has noted the species from Uttaranchal (= Uttarakhand) to Arunachal Pradesh, Northeast, West Bengal and Odisha from India and Wynter-Blyth (1957) reports it from Dehradun to Sikkim; Assam; Bengal and Odisha. Evans (1932) mentions the species from Dehradun to Kumaon; Sikkim; Bengal and Odisha from India.

Recently, *Vagrans egista sinha* (Kollar, 1844) was reported from Himachal Pradesh, India, extending its known distribution westwards (Mehra, Kirti & Sidhu, 2016).

Material and Methods

Opportunistic surveys were undertaken on 24 and 25 July, 2018 in Kurandi Range of Kanger Valley National Park, Bastar, Chhattisgarh. The paths

followed on foot were randomly chosen and the main criterion for choosing suitable paths was the likelihood of encountering butterflies along the way.

Kurandi range is a dense forest which has Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and Bamboo (*Bambusa* sp.) as major vegetation along with thick undergrowth. During the survey, in between regular thunderstorms a Vagrant was photographed at 4.29 pm on the damp forest track with a group of puddling Lineblues (*Prosotas* sp.), Cupids (*Chilades* sp.) and Pierrots (*Castalius* sp.) on scat.

The species was identified with the help of the photograph using Kehimkar (2008) and later Peter Smetacek confirmed the identity.

Discussion

The genus is not known to migrate, so it is likely that the specimen observed is from a resident population. The discovery of the Chhattisgarh population suggests that the peninsular Indian and Himalayan populations of the species might be linked via the reported population in Odisha and the Eastern Ghats. This addition to the

known fauna of Chhatisgarh indicates how little is known of the butterfly community in the state. Doubtless, there will be several further additions to the known fauna in the coming years.

References

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