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Address for Correspondence: Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal, Uttarakhand 263 136, India. Phone: ++91 8938896403 Email: butterflyresearchcentre@gmail.com

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Cover Photo by Peter Smetacek of a *Salassa mizorama* Moth

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXTENSION OF THE KNOWN DISTRIBUTION OF THE COMMON GEM BUTTERFLY <i>PORITIA HEWITSONI</i> (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) TO BASTAR, CHHATTISGARH by Anupam Sisodia & Ravi Naidu	105
FIRST RECORD OF LAUGHING DOVE (<i>SPILOPELIA SENEGALENSIS</i> LINNAEUS, 1766) (COLUMBIFORMES) IN SIKKIM, EASTERN HIMALAYA by Prem K. Chhetri, Thinlay Namgyal Lepcha, Bijoy Chhetri & Kusal Gurung	106
CONFIRMATION OF PALE GREEN AWLET <i>BURARA GOMATA</i> (LEPIDOPTERA: HESPERIIDAE) FROM EASTERN NEPAL by Sanjaya Raj Tamang, John Lhomi Nuppa, Pratik Pandeya, Shristee Panthee & Bandana Subedi	109
ADDITIONS TO THE AVIFAUNA OF ATHGARH FOREST DIVISION, CUTTACK, ODISHA, EASTERN INDIA by Arajush Payra, Suraj Kumar Dash, Himanshu Shekhar Palei & Arun Kumar Mishra	112
BUTTERFLIES (LEPIDOPTERA: PAPILIONOIDEA) OF CHHATTISGARH, INDIA by Anupam Sisodia	116
FIRST REPORT OF <i>PHACOPTERON LENTIGINOSUM</i> BUCKTON, 1896 (INSECTA: PSYLLOIDEA: PHACOPTERONIDAE) FROM ODISHA, INDIA by Ashirwad Tripathy	142
RECORD OF <i>MYCALESIS ADAMSONI</i> (WATSON, 1897) (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) FROM POKHARA AND GODAVARI, NEPAL Shristee Panthee, Mahendra Singh Limbu, Bandana Subedi, Sanjaya Raj Tamang & Amrit Poudel	145
BUTTERFLIES FEEDING ON HUMAN BLOOD: FIRST OBSERVATION FROM INDIAN REGION by Arajush Payra, Gaurab Nandi Das, Monsoon Jyoti Gogoi & Bitupan Boruah	146
FIRST REPORT OF THE GENUS <i>CALLEREBIA</i> BUTLER, 1867 (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE: SATYRINAE) FROM MIZORAM, INDIA by Lallawmsanga & Lalsiampuii Tocchawng	150
NOTES ON TAXA OF THE SALASSA LEMAI GROUP (LEPIDOPTERA: SATURNIIDAE) WITH THE DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES FROM MIZORAM, INDIA by Stefan Naumann & Esther Lahlmingliani	152
<i>SATURNIA ROSALATA</i> NAUMANN & NASSIG (LEPIDOPTERA: SATURNIIDAE) IN UTTARAKHAND: AN ADDITION TO THE INDIAN FAUNA by Shristee Panthee & Peter Smetacek	159
TWO NEW SPECIES OF <i>LOEPA</i> MOORE (LEPIDOPTERA: SATURNIIDAE) FROM THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT by Stefan Naumann & Peter Smetacek	161
BRAHMEA HEARSEYI WHITE, 1862 (LEPIDOPTERA: BRAHMAEIDAE) IN ODISHA, INDIA Sandeep Mishra & Peter Smetacek	171

EXTENSION OF THE KNOWN DISTRIBUTION OF THE COMMON GEM BUTTERFLY *PORITIA HEWITSONI* (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) TO BASTAR, CHHATTISGARH

ANUPAM SISODIA¹ & RAVI NAIDU²

¹*409, 4th floor, Royal Exotica, Opp. TV Tower, Shankar Nagar, Raipur, Chhattisgarh., 492007
sisodia.anupam@gmail.com

²Thakur Anukul Dev, Ward 31, Jagdalpur, Bastar, Chhattisgarh, 494001.
ravi.naidu@crowfoundation.com

Reviewer: Peter Smetacek

Keywords: Bastar, Kanger Valley National Park, Butterfly, India, Range Extension.

Introduction

The Common Gem butterfly *Poritia hewitsoni* Moore, [1866] has been reported from Uttarakhand to North East India (Varshney & Smetacek 2015) within India. Globally it occurs from Uttarakhand to Malaysia and Vietnam (Smetacek ([2016])).

Material and Methods

An opportunistic survey was conducted on 31 October, 2018 in Nagalsar Beat of Kanger Valley National Park, Bastar and 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.

Nagalsar Beat is a dense forest which has Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and Bamboo (*Bambusa sp.*) as major vegetation along with thick undergrowth. During the survey RN photographed a solitary male Common Gem basking in the sun, flying frequently and settling again to bask.

The photograph was sent to AS and it was identified using Smetacek ([2016]).

Discussion

The species is known to feed on Sal (Kehimkar, 2008), and occurs at low elevation with stragglers ascending to 1500 m (Smetacek ([2016])). The discussed elevation is also the elevation limit of Sal in the West

Butterfly, India, Range Extension.

Himalaya. Previously, Singh, (2003) reported the species from Dehradun reporting a westward range extension from Kumaon. In all probability this butterfly is likely to be found in other Central Indian regions on the Sal belt which have previously not been explored.

Acknowledgement

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