
**A NEW ELEVATION RECORD FOR THE INDIAN
TORTOISESHELL BUTTERFLY *AGLAIS CASCHMIRENSIS*
(KOLLAR [1844]) (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) FROM
ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA**

MINOM PERTIN & ROSHAN UPADHAYA

Society for Education and Environment Development

Miao, Changlang District, Arunachal Pradesh, India 792 122

minompertin@rediffmail.com

Reviewer: Peter Smetacek

The Himalaya and associated mountain ranges rise from nearly sea level in the plains of Assam, India to 8848 m elevation in Nepal. The proximity to the tropics and the variety of vegetation types clothing these mountains has enabled their colonisation by a vast variety of creatures. The distribution of many of these is restricted to certain altitudinal belts. In the case of Troidine butterflies, the presence of their foodplants have been shown to be a major factor governing their altitudinal distribution (Smetacek, 2011).

The Indian Tortoiseshell *Aglais caschmirensis* (Kollar, [1844]) is a species of nymphalid butterfly found in the northern regions of the Indian subcontinent, primarily in the Himalaya from Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh (Kehimkar, 2016). Irunbam *et al.* (2017) reported the species from Manipur. It has among the widest altitudinal distributions of any butterfly, being found from 400–5,360

m elevation (Kehimkar, 2016). The larval hostplants are species of *Urtica* L.

A specimen of the species was photographed at Miao (230 m), Changlang District, Arunachal Pradesh, on 30 May, 2019 around noon, when it was settling on cowdung outside a cowshed. Although the species is known to visit flowers, it usually does not settle on dung (Peter Smetacek *pers. comm.*)

The present record is around 170 m lower than its previous known lower limit mentioned by Kehimkar (2016). It is possible that the specimen photographed belongs to a resident population, since the larval hostplant, species of *Urtica*, grows abundantly in the area.

References

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CONFIRMATION OF THE COMMON PALMFLY *ELYMNIAS HYPERMNESTRA UNDULARIS* (DRURY, 1773) (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) IN ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA

KUMPATLA BALAJI¹ & ANANT SHANKAR²

¹*Project Scientist, Wildlife, Rajahmundry Division, Kakinada 533 003, Andhra Pradesh*

²*Divisional Forest Officer (Wildlife), Rajahmundry Division, Kakinada 53300, Andhra Pradesh*

Reviewer: Peter Smetacek

The Common Palmfly *Elymnias hypermnestra* (Linnaeus, 1763) is a butterfly with a wide distribution from Punjab, along the Himalaya to NE India, Maharashtra and Gujarat (Varshney & Smetacek, 2015) and on to SE Asia. The north Indian population is placed in the subspecies *undularis* (Drury, 1773) with a distribution from Punjab to NE India and Gujarat to northern Maharashtra. Although Varshney & Smetacek (2015) treat the taxon *caudata* Butler, 1871 as a subspecies of *E. hypermnestra* with a distribution from Maharashtra to Kerala, Wei *et al.* (2017) recognise *E. caudata* as a good species with a distribution south of a line from Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Bangalore (Karnataka) and Kasargode (Kerala). It is not clear where they obtained their data for the east coast, but the distribution on the west coast is certainly incomplete, since the taxon *caudata* had been recorded from Goa and Maharashtra in addition to Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu

(Varshney & Smetacek, 2015; Bhakare & Ogale, 2018).

While the distribution of these two taxa, *undularis* and *caudata*, is clear on the west coast, little is known of the distribution on the east coast. There are some unreliable reports of *E. hypermnestra* in Andhra Pradesh, but since no evidence was published and this was reported along with such improbable records as *Erites falcipennis* Wood Mason & de Niceville, 1883 and *Euthalia telchinia* (Menetries, 1857), the records are best treated as unreliable (Peter Smetacek, *pers. comm.*).

In Andhra Pradesh, *Elymnias hypermnestra undularis* is a common butterfly and has been recorded from the Papikonda National Park (2 March, 2018), Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (5 October, 2018) and at the residence of the Divisional Forest Officer, Kakinada (March, 2018), all in East Godavari district. It occurs in the vicinity of palm trees, its larval host