



ADDITION TO THE DOCUMENTATION OF LEPIDOPTERA FAUNA OF HIMALAYA - A BOOK REVIEW OF “BUTTERFLIES OF UTTARAKHAND”

K.A. Subramanian

Southern Regional Centre, Zoological Survey of India, 130, Santhome High Road, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600028, India
subbuka.zsi@gmail.com

Butterflies (Insecta: Lepidoptera) are flagship species of insect conservation. They are sensitive to ecosystem and landscape changes. Globally, they have been used across continents and biomes to monitor ecosystem health. Their strong association with host plants, habitat specificity and relative easiness in accurate field identification and quantitative sampling makes them an ideal taxa for biomonitoring studies. The Indian subcontinent is a global hotspot for butterflies with nearly 1,500 known species. The subcontinent has a rich history of scientific studies on butterflies starting from the colonial period and butterflies are one of the best studied insect taxa in the subcontinent. The first illustrated field guide on Indian butterflies was by Wynter-Blyth (1957). With the advent of modern printing and digital technology several field guides on butterflies for different parts of India are now available. This wide availability field guides and good online resources such as www.ifoundbutterflies.org, <http://yutaka.it-n.jp/> and Global Lepidoptera Name Index have promoted several scientific investigations on taxonomy, ecology, behaviour, evolution, genetics and phylogeny of Indian butterflies in the recent times.

The “*Butterflies of Uttarakhand - A Field Guide*” (2018) by Sanjay Sondhi and Krushnamegh Kunte is the third in the series on Himalayan butterflies by the authors, the other two being “*Butterflies of Garo Hills*” (2013) and “*Butterflies and Moths of Pakke Tiger Reserve*” (2014). This third book forms an important recent publication on Indian Himalayan butterflies. The authors are well known lepidopterists and have been conducting extensive studies on butterflies of India. The recent book on butterflies of Uttarakhand is a comprehensive account of 500 species of butterflies recorded from the Himalayan state. The book is well designed and lavishly illustrated with good quality colour photographs or museum specimens of all known species of butterflies of Uttarakhand. The book is organized

into different sections such as introduction, species descriptions, butterfly hotspots of Uttarakhand, bibliography, glossary and checklist. The species description, which forms the core of the book, is organized under different families and subfamilies. Each species is briefly described with field or museum specimen photos with information on habits, range and status. Species protected under the Wildlife Act (Protection), 1972 are also indicated wherever applicable. The book is a valuable addition to the documentation of biodiversity of western Himalaya.

This affordably priced book is aimed at students, amateur naturalists, tourists and conservation managers to promote research and ecotourism on butterflies of Uttarakhand. Information on larval host plants, adult



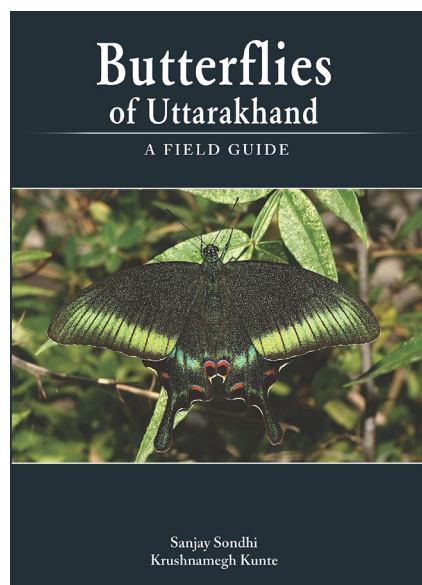
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Butterflies of Uttarakhand - A Field Guide -- Sanjay Sondhi & Krushnamegh Kunte

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food plants, flight season and conservation issues, however, are conspicuously absent from the book. This information would have definitely increased the value of this important publication and initiated addressing butterfly conservation issues in the state, especially among the academia and biodiversity managers. Though authors have taken care to organize species descriptions under different families and subfamilies, in species descriptions and checklist, the authorship or year of publication in species names are not cited as per the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN). To illustrate, in *Chersonesia risa* (Doubleday, [1848]), *Cyrestis thodamas* Dyère, [1840] and *Argynnis clara* Blanchard, [1844] ssp. *clara* the year of publication is enclosed in square brackets. Use of square brackets

enclosing the year of publication is not as per the code. As per ICZN (Article 51.3), the species names should have been cited as *Chersonesia risa* (Doubleday, 1848) and *Cyrestis thodamas* Dyère, 1840. Similarly, the subspecies is written as, *Argynnis clara clara* Blanchard, 1844 and not as mentioned above. Glaring copy editing errors in common English names such as “Double-banded Blue Crow” instead of “Double-branded Blue Crow” could have been avoided. I am sure these inadvertent copy editing errors will be taken care in future editions. With all above minor shortfalls, the book is a much need addition to the documentation of Himalayan fauna and must for a serious naturalist, nature guides and conservation managers.

