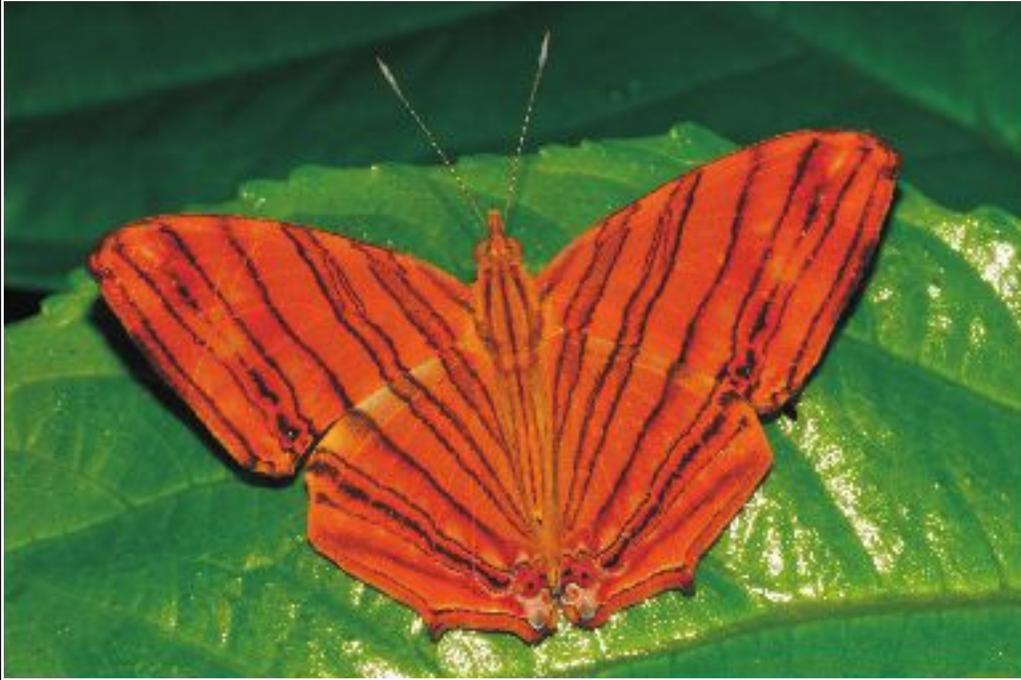


Northeast India Natural History Series Part 2

BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS OF PAKKE TIGER RESERVE



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ISBN No. 978-93-5126-899-4

Authors: Sanjay Sondhi & Krushnamegh Kunte

Citation: Sondhi S. & K. Kunte (2014). Butterflies and Moths of Pakke Tiger Reserve. Titli Trust (Dehradun), and Indian Foundation for Butterflies (Bengaluru). vi +202 pp.

Cover Photographs : (Clockwise from top)

Common Maplet *Chersonesia risa*, Wizard *Rhinopalpa polynice*,

Indian Awlking *Choaspes benjaminii* ©Sanjay Sondhi

Common Gem *Poritia hewitsoni* ©Rohan Lovalekar

Published by Titli Trust and Indian Foundation for Butterflies

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Moths - Sanjay Sondhi

Photograph Copyright: Respective photographers

Map : S. Raghunath

Illustrations : Krushnamegh Kunte

Funded : The Forests and Environment Department, Arunachal Pradesh

Designed & Printed : Print Vision, Dehradun

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Color Sergeant *Athyma inara inara* Doubleday, 1850

Desc: 55-70 mm. Male - UPF: cell streak entire, white or pale orange. Large white cell-end spot. UPH: Post-discal band orange. Female - above brown with orange markings. Apical orange band broad and even.

Similar species: Male - resembles male Orange Staff Sergeant *A. cama*. Female - resembles female Orange Staff Sergeant *A. cama*, lascars (*Pantoporia* spp.), yellow sailers.

Habits/Habitat: Common. Fast flier. Often basks on the upper surface of leaves in the tree canopy. Males visit moist patches. Females less common. Seen at streams in forest from the foothills up to 1,900 m.



Krushnamegh Kunte

- Distr.: C. and E. Himalaya, NE India, Odisha, Western Ghats
- Seen at: everywhere
- Seen in: Apr, Jun, Sep, Oct



Krushnamegh Kunte

Female

Commodore *Auzakia danava danava* Moore, 1857

Desc.: 80-85 mm. Brown above. Male - UPF: dark brown markings in cell, broad pale brown discal band, with a series of obscure brown spots closer to cell. UPH: pale brown with dark brown wing base. UPF costa and UPH veins and tornus with greenish tinge. Female - like male, but discal and post-discal bands creamy white.

Similar species: other commodores.

Habits/Habitats: Very rare (more common at higher altitudes). Fast flier. Both sexes visit moist patches. Prefers stream edges in forest. Fond of basking at the tree canopy. Seen from the foothills up to 2,200 m.



Sanjay Sondhi

- Distr.: Uttarakhand east to E. Himalaya, NE India
- Seen at: Langka
- Seen in: Apr



Sanjay Sondhi

Female

Green Commodore *Sumalia daraxa daraxa* Doubleday, 1848

Desc: 60-70 mm. Above, brown with pale green discal band broken into spots near FW apex. Post-discal area paler with black spots and sub-marginal black line. Tornus red, with black spots. UN: largely reddish-brown with similar markings. HW base very pale green.

Similar species: Red-tailed Marquis *Bassarona recta*, Banded Marquis *B. teuta* both have creamy-yellow discal band.

Habits/Habitat: Uncommon but local (more common at higher altitudes). Flies fast. Visits moist soil. Feeds on dung and animal carcasses. Prefers forest edges, wet roads and streams from the foothills up to 2,000 m.



Sanjay Sondhi

- Distr.: Uttarakhand east to E. Himalaya, NE India, Paschimbanga
- Seen at: Khari, Sukhanala
- Seen in: Mar



Sanjay Sondhi

Red-tailed Marquis *Bassarona recta*

Scarce White Commodore *Sumalia zulema* Doubleday, 1848

SCH I

Desc.: 85-95 mm. Brown above with a white discal band across both wings. Double row of black spots along the margins of both wings, separated by a reddish line. UPF : upper end of white discal band is curved inwards and broken into separate spots.

Similar species: Commander *Moduza procris*, White Commodore *Parasarpa dudu* UPF/H: single row of black spots along wing margin, upper end of white discal band is continuous to costa, Green Commodore *S. daraxa*.

Habits/Habitat: Very rare. Habits like other commodores. Patrols forest tracks. Prefers forests from the foothills up to 1250 m.



Sanjay Sondhi

- Distr.: C. and E. Himalaya, NE India
- Seen at: Pakke-Kesang
- Seen in: Sep



Sanjay Sondhi

White Commodore *Parasarpa dudu*

Moths of Pakke Tiger Reserve: an introduction



About this book

This guide covers 83 species of moths recorded from the Pakke Tiger Reserve. The species selected cover some of the more visible and colourful moths, as well as some of the more prominent moth families. The number of moth species recorded from Pakke exceeds 500, although only a few hundred have been identified to species level.

About moths

Moths are close relatives of butterflies, both belonging to the Order Lepidoptera. Globally, there are between 150,000 and 180,000 species of moths, almost 10 times as many as butterflies. It is estimated that there are over 10,000 species of moths in India, with many species still to be described. A reasonable guess could be that there are 6,000 to 7,000 moth species in the Eastern Himalaya.

Moths in India are very poorly studied. An Englishman, Sir G. F. Hampson, wrote the last comprehensive books about Indian moths. Hampson wrote four volumes of books on moths, as part of the Fauna of British India series, between 1894 and 1898, more than a hundred years ago. Most of the literature published since then is scattered and outdated.

Like butterflies moths too are cold-blooded insects. Most moths fly at night, which makes them difficult to study but provides them protection from visual predators. In addition, moths feed on flowers that bloom at night, getting nectar from the flowers, and in turn, assisting in pollination. However, not all moths feed on nectar; some feed on rotting fruit and tree sap, while there are others that do not feed at all, as adults! Of course, not all moths fly at night. There are many day-flying moths as well, many of which mimic distasteful butterflies.

How to use this guide?

Moth identification is difficult, especially as there are few available guides in India. The best way to begin moth identification is to familiarize yourself with some of the common families of moths. The various parts of a moth are very similar to butterflies.

Family: Sphingidae (Hawkmoths)

Hawkmoths are large-bodied, mostly nocturnal moths with long, narrow forewings. They are powerful fliers. They have a long proboscis and are fond of feeding on flower nectar. Some of these moths migrate long distances. The caterpillars of these moths are thick-bodied, hairless and have a short tail. Some adult hawkmoths, such as the Death's Head Hawkmoth, let out squeaks when caught.

Subfamily: Macroglossinae



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Silky Forest Hawkmoth *Acosmeryx sericeus*
Walker, 1856 96-106 mm



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Jade Hawkmoth *Daphnis hypothous*
Cramer, 1780 86-120 mm



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Large Banded Hawkmoth *Elibia dolichus*
Westwood, 1847 120-146 mm



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Greater Yam Hawkmoth *Theretra nessus*
Drury, 1773 90-130 mm



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Cinnamon Gliding Hawkmoth *Ambulyx moorei*
Moore, 1858 100-110 mm



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Large Pink-and-Green Hawkmoth *Callambulyx rubicosa* Walker, 1856 132 mm



BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS OF PAKKE TIGER RESERVE

This book covers butterflies and moths of the Pakke Tiger Reserve in East Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh, northeast India. It contains descriptions and photographs of 284 butterfly species, provides key features to identify them and notes on similar species to assist in identification. Photographs of 95 additional similar looking butterfly species are also included. Notes on the natural history of the butterfly species are also included. This book also covers 83 species of commonly seen moths with colour photographs for identification and notes about the moth families.

