

# Bugs R All

Newsletter of the  
Invertebrate Conservation & Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA)

## Genetic aberration in a Continental Common Pierrot from West Bengal, India



The genetic aberration of Common Pierrot *Castalius rosimon* (Fabricius, 1775). © Arunava Garai.

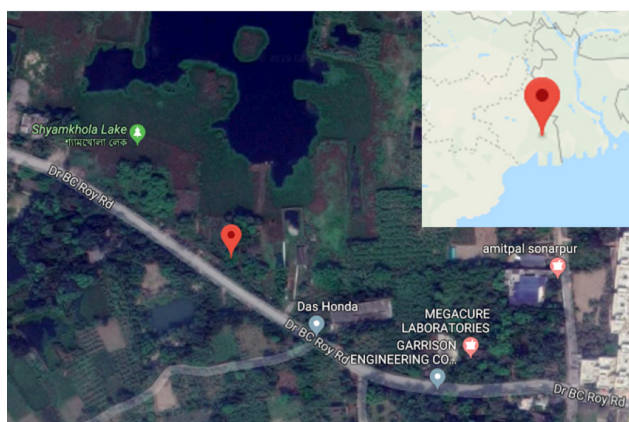
The southern region of West Bengal has a fairly good distribution of lycaenid butterflies. Checklists obtained from different parts of West Bengal have collectively established the Continental Common Pierrot (CCP) *Castalius rosimon rosimon* (Fabricius, 1775) to be a common butterfly species (Mukherjee et al. 2015; Payra et al. 2017). The species has been sighted throughout the southern part of the West Bengal. The normal phenotypic description of the species includes, hind wing with one tail each, underside white with many irregularly arranged black spots and a basal streak on both the wings. Upper side with black border (termen and costa) in males, which is similar in females but with

much darker and thicker markings. Basal part of upper side of forewing and hindwing has metallic scales. Forewing of female has rounded termen (Bingham 1907; Kehimkar 2008).

During our field survey on 15 May 2019 at 12.36h, we observed a group of Lycaenidae butterflies fluttering (at Shyamkhola (22.424°N, 88.390°E), near Shyamkhola Birding Place, at Narendrapur, Kolkata, West Bengal), which consisted of CCP and Asian Zebra Blues *Leptotes plinius plinius* (Fabricius, 1793), on and around a bush at an elevation of about 2m. A few butterflies were found to be sun basking while others were

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Google map image showing the point where we observed the genetically aberrant butterfly. Shyamkhola (22.424°N, 88.390°E), near Shyamkhola Birding Place, at Narendrapur, Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

nectar feeding. From the group, one was observed to have distinctly dark colouration on the underside of both the wings which is not the natural colour pattern of the CCP. The dark colouration was located at the underside of both forewing and hindwing, ranging from the apical (touching the costal margin) to the basal region of forewing but not touching the termen (outer margin), and sub-apical to post-basal region of hindwing. By comparing the previously published descriptions of the subspecies, we identified it to be a genetic aberration of CCP. Owing to its active erratic flight, only one proper photograph was successfully captured after which it flew away and we were not able to relocate it. The image of the butterfly which is used in this report, has already been uploaded in <https://www.ifoundbutterflies.org> with media code: dq615 by the second author, to retain his priority; however, the same image has been used here with consent from Garai (the second co-author)

who holds the copyright permission and from the chief editor of the website (Saji 2020).

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