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

Black-spotted Pierrot, addition to the butterfly fauna of Chhattisgarh, India.



Black-spotted Pierrot, upper-wing, 30 January 2020, Kurud. © Gulab Chand.

Chhattisgarh is a centrally situated state in India and has a great biodiversity of butterflies studied and reported, with a total of 168 species (Chandra et al. 2007, 2014; Chandra & Sharma 2009; Dubey et al. 2015; Sisodia 2019; Tandan et al. 2020, 2021a,b; Nihalani 2021). A compiled checklist with 159 species of butterflies was published (Sisodia 2019) from 13 districts of Chhattisgarh out of 28 districts at that time, in which the Dhamtari district was not included in the study sites by earlier workers

on butterflies.

Dhamtari district was established on 6 July 1998 dividing the Raipur district of Chhattisgarh and situated between 20.71N & 81.55E at 457 m. Dhamtari, Kurud, Magarlod, and Nagri are revenue blocks of the Dhamtari district situated in the fertile plains of Chhattisgarh with a total area of about 4,084 sq.km. Geographically the Sihawa hill of the Satpura range is located to the east of the district. Mahanadi is the main river with tributaries being Sendur,

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Black-spotted Pierrot, upper-wing, 10 July 2020, Raipur.
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Pairy, Sondur, Joank, Kharun, and Shivnath. The Ravishankar Sagar dam popularly known as Gangrel dam irrigates almost 57,000 ha of agricultural land. Due to its rich resources of water supply and natural habitat as well as man-made agro lands which serve food and shelter, the district has varied biodiversity. For the present study, we surveyed the various sites of all revenue blocks of Dhamtari as Bhatagaon

nursery, Kodebode village, Atang village, Govt. P.G. College Campus in Kurud block, Megha in Magarload, Gangrel and P.G. College Campus in Dhamtari block, Gadhdongari village, and Sihawa in Nagari block. Field visits and surveys were done in the morning hours, digital specimens were photographed by DSLR Camera Canon 1300D, and mobile phones - iPhone 5S. As a result, we found, one species *Tarucus balkanicus*

nigra was previously unreported from Chhattisgarh. The identification was made by field characters using BNHS field guide (Kehimkar 2016) but species was confirmed with online help by Krushnamegh Kunte.

Black-spotted Pierrot
Tarucus balkanicus nigra
Bethune-Baker, [1918]

Specimen Recorded:
30.i.2020, Kodebod village of Kurud Block, Dhamtari District, & 10.vii.2020, Science college campus Raipur, Chhattisgarh, by Gulab Chand.

Known distribution: The species is widely distributed, ranging through Africa, southeastern Europe, western Asia, and southern Asia - the Indian subcontinent (Evans 1955). In India it is distributed in north of Maharashtra to West Bengal (Varshney & Smetacek 2015). Basu *et al.* (2019) based on close inspection of phenotypes of the specimens and dissection of the male genitalia

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described the distribution of *T. balkanicus nigra* in the Indian subcontinent including peninsular and central India (Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu).

The species photographed shows three black spots in dull dark blue background at center of upper forewing, narrow black border at cell end in upper forewing and tailed hind wing. The species is multivoltine, found in scrub forests, common in open and dry habitats, widely distributed from coastal plains to ca. 2,300 m in the Himalaya, flying throughout the year (Kunte 2017). Present observation was made and photographed during a field visit at Kodebod village in a small grassland area near national highway 30, Raipur to Jagdalpur road. The soil type is laterite and locally known as Murum, based on which the village area is known as Bhatapara. Laterite is a soil type having rich iron and aluminum in hot and wet tropical areas.

Basu *et al.* (2019) provided a taxonomic and nomenclatural review of eight species of the group of Afro-Oriental butterflies *Tarucus* (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) in the Indian Subcontinent as *T. balkanicus nigra* Bethune Baker, [1918] — Black-spotted Pierrot, *T. callinara* Butler, 1886 — Spotted Pierrot, *T. hazara* Evans, 1932 — Dark Violet Pierrot, *T. venosus* Moore, 1882 — Veined

Pierrot, *T. nara* (Kollar, 1848) — Striped Pierrot, *T. indica* Evans, 1932 — Transparent Pierrot, *T. ananda* (de Nicéville, [1884]) — Dark Pierrot and *T. waterstradti* Druce, 1895 — Separate Pierrot. Chandra *et al.* (2007) reported three species of *Tarucus* as *T. nara*, *T. indica*, and *T. callinara* from Bastar, Dantewada & Kanker, and one species *T. balkanicus* from Madhya Pradesh. Further, Chandra *et al.* (2014) reported four species of *Tarucus* as *T. plinius*, *T. callinara*, *T. nara* and *T. theophrastus* from Chhattisgarh. Sisodia (2019) in his compiled checklist of 159 species included two species of *Tarucus* as *T. callinara* and *T. nara* but he put these two species on the tentative list because there have been no further records for confirmation of the presence of these species in Chhattisgarh. In the present study, we have recorded *T. balkanicus nigra* adding as a new record for the state Chhattisgarh from Kodebod village of Kurud block, District Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh.

The observations of *T. balkanicus nigra* were also made from Chhattisgarh and uploaded on Butterflies of India website www.ifoundbutterflies.org, observed by Kavita R Das, on 02 June 2020 & 10 July 2020 at Chhattisgarh Takniki Vidhyapith Amanaka, District Raipur, and Kamal Kishore Jangde on 28 August 2020 at Malkharoda, Janjgir-Champa district of Chhattisgarh state (Churi *et al.* 2020).

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Acknowledgment: The Authors are thankful to Renu Maheshwari, Professor, Govt. N.P.G. College of Science, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, for encouragement to work on the biodiversity of Chhattisgarh. We are also thankful to Dr. Kavita R Das, Assistant Professor, Govt. N.P.G. College of Science, Raipur, and Shri Kamal Kishore Jangde, Janjgir-Champa, for their contribution to the butterfly fauna of the Chhattisgarh State

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Citation: Chandi, G., H.N. Tandan, R. Naidu (2022). Black-spotted Pierrot, addition to the butterfly fauna of Chhattisgarh, India. *Bugs R All* #235, In: *Zoo's Print* 37(3): 33–36.

Bugs R All is a newsletter of the Invertebrate Conservation and Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA) published with the financial support of Zoological Society of London. For communication, Email: zp@zooreach.org

