

Observation of Pale Grass Blue butterfly mating and predatory behaviour of ant

The Pale Grass Blue butterfly is a tiny butterfly found in southern Asia that belongs to the Lycaenid (blue) family. Vincenz Kollar described the species for the first time in 1844 (Varshney & Smetacek 2015).

Pale Grass Blue butterfly lays eggs on certain host plants which includes Leguminosae and Acanthaceae plants and *Oxalis corniculata* which belongs to family Oxalidaceae (Robinson et al. 2010). In nature, ants are omnivores, scavengers, and indirect herbivores (Wilson & Hölldobler 2005). Most ants are predators, and some feed on and prey on other social insects such as other ants (Carroll & Janzen 1973).

On 28 August 2021, at 1301 h, a pair of Pale Grass Blue butterflies was observed copulating over a leaf of a *Colocasia* plant in Athgharia



Ant attacking a copulating pair of butterflies.

Village, Nalbari District, Assam, India. While they were copulating, an ant attempted to bite the lowermost part of the butterfly's abdomen. The butterfly couple fled to the nearest *Colocasia* leaf for safety when they were startled by the ant's presence.

References

- Carroll, C.R. & D.H. Janzen (1973). Ecology of foraging by ants. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 4(1): 231–257.
- Robinson, G.S., P.R. Ackery, I.J. Kitching, G.W. Beccaloni & L.M. Hernández (2010). HOSTS—a Database of the World's Lepidopteran Hostplants. Natural History Museum, London. <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/hosts>. Accessed on 12 December 2022.
- Varshney, R.K. & P. Smetacek (eds.) (2015). A Synoptic Catalogue of the Butterflies of India. Butterfly Research Centre, Bhimtal and Indinov Publishing, New Delhi, 261 pp.
- Wilson, E.O. & B. Hölldobler (2005). The rise of the ants: A phylogenetic and ecological explanation. *PNAS* 102(21): 7411–7414. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0502264102>.

Kangkanjyoti Bhattacharyya¹ & Meetal Deori²

^{1&2} Department of Zoology, Nalbari College, Nalbari, Assam 781335, India.

Emails: ¹kangkanjyotibhattacharyya1@gmail.com (corresponding author) & ²mitu.deori@gmail.com

Citation: Bhattacharyya, K. & M. Deori (2023). Observation of Pale Grass Blue butterfly mating and predatory behaviour of ant. *Bugs R All* #262, In: *Zoo's Print* 38(2): 25.

Bugs R All is a newsletter of the Invertebrate Conservation and Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA)

