

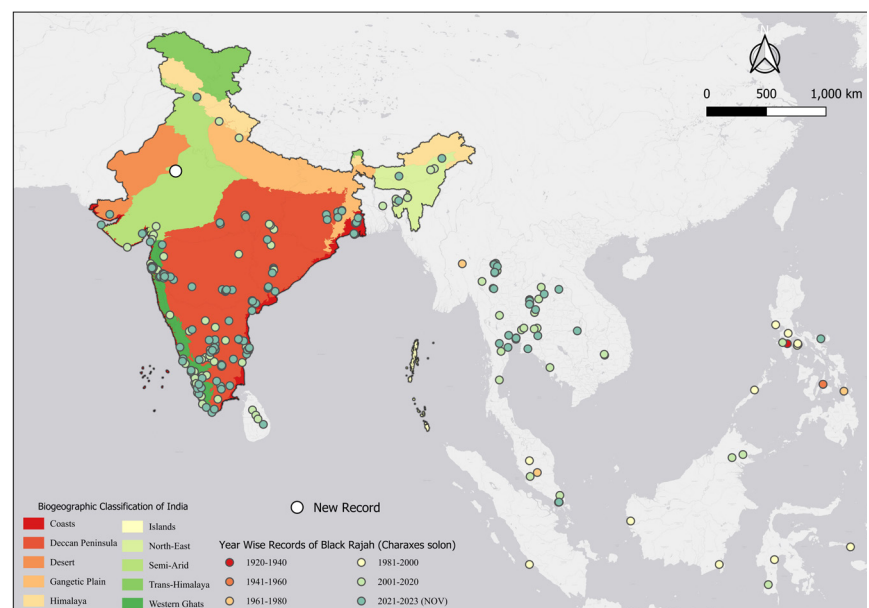
A photographic record of *Charaxes solon* from Aravalli hills of Rajasthan, India

Charaxes solon Fabricius, 1793, belonging to the family Nymphalidae, is a striking butterfly species known for its large size and distinctive black colouration with iridescent yellow markings (Varshney & Smetacek 2015). Historically, its distribution has been documented from Western Ghats, Himalaya (Sheikh & Parey 2019), Gangetic Plains (Mukherjee 2021), semi-arid (Bohra & Purkayastha 2021), Deccan Peninsula (Kuchanwar & Kamble 2021) and northeastern region (Bohra & Purkayastha 2021; Deori & Sonowal 2022). However, during a recent field survey to Aravalli regions of Central Rajasthan, we recorded and confirmed the presence of *C. solon* from this previously unreported region. The common name of this species is Black Rajah.

The recorded observation and morphological examinations



Charaxes solon on *Lantana camara*, the characteristic narrow wavy black lines with marginal yellowish-green spots (Kehimkar 2016). © Rounak Choudhary.



Biogeographic map of India showing distribution and previous records of *Charaxes solon* (iNaturalist 2023) and observation locality.

based on photographic evidence confirm the identity as *C. solon*, as described in previous literature (Kehimkar 2016; Smetacek 2017) marking the new record of this species in the region. The site of observation (26.531 N, 74.671 E) is an ecotone of arid and semi-arid regions influenced by the Aravalli Hills creating a unique ecosystem that supports a diverse range of flora and fauna (Raj & Sharma 2023). This region experiences a pronounced dry season, with rainfall primarily occurring during the monsoon months. The climate is characterized by hot summers and mild winters, making it a challenging habitat for many species. During our observation studies, *C. solon* was recorded feeding on *Lantana camara*, an invasive plant. The presence of *C. solon* in this region significantly extends its known geographical range. The various social platforms have recorded its sightings from: Assam, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, and southern Indian states (iNaturalist 2023; ifoundbutterflies 2024).

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