

Distribution record of Blue-spotted Forester Moth in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

Episteme is a genus of moths belonging to the family Noctuidae, first established by Jacob Hübner in 1820. The genus is known for its widespread distribution, with six species recorded in India (Anon 2024). Among these, the Blue-spotted Forester Moth *Episteme adulatrix* (Kollar, [1844]) is a day-flying species distinguished by its vivid wing colouration, featuring striking patterns of blue in the forewing base, with two orange spots in hindwing towards the tornus. This species is prevalent across southern and southeastern Asia, with notable populations in India (Anon 2024). *E. adulatrix* plays a crucial ecological role, as its larvae feed on a diverse range of host plants. Originally described by Mr. Vincenz Kollar, an Austrian entomologist in 1844, the species has significantly enhanced our understanding of Lepidoptera diversity in the region. This note specifically reports the distribution of *E.*



Episteme adulatrix recorded in BNHS-VCBC Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.
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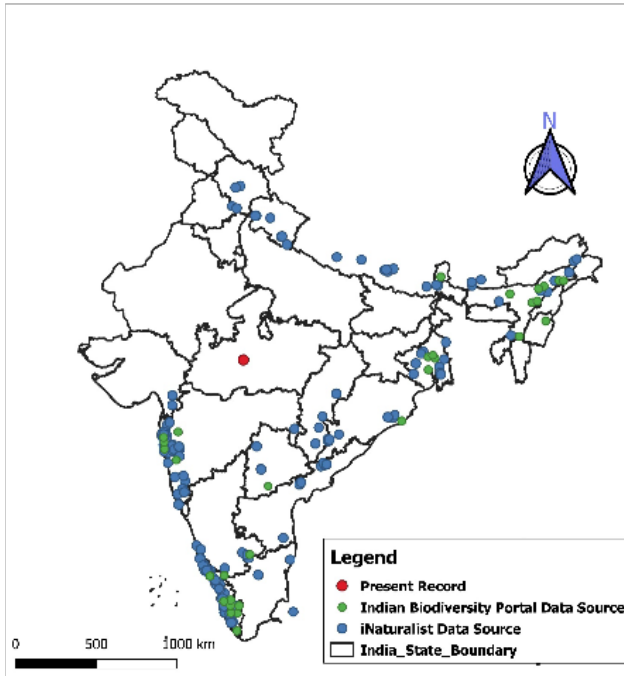
adulatrix in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

On 16 August 2024 at 1145 h, we recorded the mating of a moth species at the BNHS-Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (77.375 E, 23.173 N; 672 m), Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India. The mating event lasted for 17 minutes, during which photographs were taken for species identification. The moth exhibited distinctive

morphological features: the upper side of the forewing was black with large yellow markings, a row of small white spots, and pale blue spots at the base. The upper side of the hindwings was also black, featuring small white submarginal spots and two orange spots near the tornus. The head, thorax, and abdomen with black and orange bands. Whereas, *E. nigripennis* Butler, 1875 (Sri Lankan species) does not

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Map representing the present and past distribution records of *Episteme adulatrix* in India.

have any orange basally on the HW. These characteristics confirmed the species as *Episteme adulatrix*.

The distribution of *Episteme adulatrix* is largely confined to specific biogeographical regions in India, predominantly the Western Ghats, Eastern Ghats, and Himalayan regions. Hampson (1894) stated that this species was very common and widely distributed throughout India and Burma. These findings suggest that *Episteme adulatrix* has a strong preference for mountainous habitats. Within the central Indian landscape, this species has been recorded in Chhattisgarh, yet there are no confirmed records from Madhya Pradesh. Although some published literature on moth distribution in Madhya Pradesh exists, these studies have not documented the presence

of *Episteme adulatrix* (Chandra & Nema 2008; Dubey et al. 2021) Consequently, this observation may indicate both a potential range contraction and a new distribution record of *Episteme adulatrix* in Madhya Pradesh. Further research is essential to better understand the inter-specific interaction of the species distribution patterns within the state.

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Arockianathan Samson¹, Hemant Bajpai², Zainab Khan³ & Jeff Francis Vithayathil⁴

¹⁻⁴ Vulture Conservation Programme, Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400001, India.

^{1&3} Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh 462007, India.

^{2&4} Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre, Pinjore, Haryana 134102, India.

Email: ¹kingvulture1786@gmail.com (corresponding author)

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