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BugsALL

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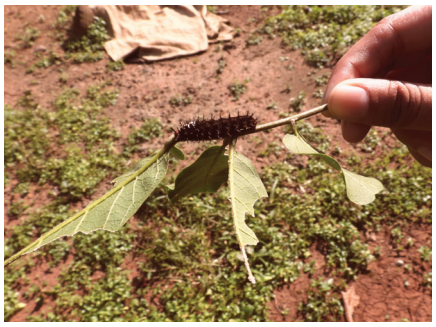
Newsletter of the
Invertebrate Conservation & Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA)

Some observations on the life cycle of the Great Eggfly *Hypolimnas bolina* Linnaeus 1758

Butterflies are a widely recognized group of insects, admired for their beauty and vibrant colours, making them popular among nature enthusiasts. They are highly sensitive to environmental factors such as temperature, humidity, rainfall, and the availability of larval host plants (Ribeiro & Freitas 2012).

Due to their dependence on specific plants for food and sheltering throughout their life cycle, butterflies are often used as indicators of habitat disturbance and environmental change (Kunte 1997; Padhye et al. 2006). Their abundance is a sign of a thriving ecosystem, as they play a crucial role in the food chain as both predators and prey (Blair 1999; Mennechez et al. 2003). Additionally, butterflies are considered umbrella species in

Host plant *Sapindus mukorossi* and Great Eggfly caterpillar.



Caterpillar.

Caterpillar character: Dark brown in colour and orange colour head.

Pupa.

Adult emerged from the pupa.

Adult released into natural environment.

Great Eggfly life cycle – caterpillar to adult. © Arockianathan Samson.

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Host plant *Sapindus mukorossi*. © Arockianathan Samson.

conservation planning, where their protection can also safeguard other species within the same habitat (Betrus et al. 2005).

In this study, we observed the life cycle of the Great Eggfly *Hypolimnas bolina* Linnaeus, 1758, from caterpillar to adult stages, as well as its host plants in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India. This species is widely distributed across southeast Asia (Clarke & Sheppard 1975) and its behaviour offers insights into habitat-specific interactions and ecological health.

On 28 August 2024, we observed a caterpillar feeding on *Sapindus mukorossi* (commonly known as Reetha). Due to heavy rainfall, we collected the caterpillar and placed it in a plastic container with leaves and sticks to create a safe environment for further development. By 29 August 2024, the caterpillar had formed a pupa, and on 4 September 2024 at 1030 h, an adult Great Eggfly emerged. We released the butterfly into the natural environment.

While this study has some limitations, such as missing the egg and caterpillar stages, it provides valuable insights into the host plant, identification of the Great Eggfly's caterpillar and pupa structure, and the metamorphosis period from pupa to adult (6 days). This observation offers a foundation for future studies on the life cycle of the Great Eggfly.

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