

BUTTERFLIES OF COIMBATORE

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Butterflies contribute a great deal of interest and fascination to the natural world. They increase the earth's beauty and their symbolism has figured prominently in the art and literature of all cultures (Pyle *et al.*, 1981). They constitute an important resource in aesthetics, educational and environmental investigations. The most important environmental use is that butterflies serve as ecological indicators. They are capable of supplying information on changes in the ambient features of any ecosystem.

Butterflies are well adapted to special ecological conditions of its corresponding vegetation type. Even closely related types of vegetation which belong to the same plant sociological association can be differentiated by their Lepidopteran fauna (Thomas, 1984). Once a habitat is no longer found suitable, they will emigrate and disappear very rapidly.

As Coimbatore is rapidly being covered with concrete, we made an intensive survey of the city and its environs for butterflies to determine the health of its ecosystem. Our survey (1991-1995), revealed that there are now 104 species of butterflies, 31 more than that recorded earlier in 1933 (Ramakrishna Ayyar and Krishna Ayyar, 1933). But, two pierid butterflies, viz., *Anaphoeis mesentina* Cramer and *Appias hippo* Cramer recorded by them were not sighted during this survey. Newly introduced trees like *Acacia mellifera* (Vahl) Benth in the social forestry programme, have helped us sight another new butterfly, *Spindasis elima* Moore in and around Coimbatore. Another important sighting is that of *Castalius rosimon* (Fabricius) one of the protected butterflies under the Wildlife Protection Act (1972), Schedule 1, Part IV, near Marudhamalai. If Coimbatore is allowed to maintain its greenery, butterflies are likely to be present atleast in the wooded campuses of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Bharathiar University and Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding adding luster to the beauty of Coimbatore.

(See next page for list of butterflies of Coimbatore.)

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Common leopard
Phalanta phalantha



Male



Female

Common gull
Caoira nerissa

Table 1 List of butterflies recorded in Coimbatore (1991-1995)

Scientific name *	Common Name**	Scientific name *	Common Name**
Danaidae			
<i>Danaus chrysippus</i> (Linnaeus)	Plain Tiger	<i>Spalgis epeus epeus</i> (Westwood)	Apefly
<i>D. gentusia</i> (Cramer)	Common Tiger	<i>Spindasis elima</i> (Moore)	Scarce Shot Silverline
<i>D. hamata</i> (McLeay)	Dark Blue Tiger	<i>Syntarucus jesous gamra</i> (Ledener)	African Babul Blue
<i>D. limniace leopardus</i> (Butler)	Blue Tiger	<i>Talicauda nyseus</i> (Guerin)	Red Pierrot
<i>Euploea core</i> (Cramer)	Common Indian Crow	<i>Tajuna jehana</i> Moore	Plains Royal Blue
<i>E. klugi erichsoni</i> C. & R. Felder	Brown King Crow	<i>Tarucus indica</i> Evans	Faint Red Pierrot
<i>E. mulcifer</i> (Cramer)	Striped Blue Crow	<i>Virachola isocrates</i> (Fabricius)	Common Guava Blue
<i>E. sylvester coreta</i> (Godart)	Double-branded Black Crow	<i>Zizeeria maha</i> Kollar	Pale Grass Blue
Satyridae			
<i>Elymnas hypermnestra</i> Linnaeus	Common Palmfly	Papilionidae	
<i>Melanitis leda ismene</i> (Cramer)	Common Evening Brown	<i>Chilasa clytia clytia</i> (Linnaeus)	Common Mime
<i>Mycalesis mineus</i> (Linnaeus)	Dark-brand Bush Brown	<i>Graphium agamemnon</i> (Linnaeus)	Tailed Jay
<i>M. perseus</i> (Fabricius)	Common Bush Brown	<i>G. sarpedon</i> (Linnaeus)	Common Blue Bottle
<i>M. irsala subdita</i> (Moore)	Tamil Bush Brown	<i>Atrophaneura hector</i> Linnaeus	Crimson Rose
<i>Ypthima avanta</i> Moore	Jewel Four-ring	<i>A. aristolochiae aristolochiae</i> (Fabricius)	Common Rose
<i>Y. hubneri</i> Kirby var. <i>ceylonica</i>	Common Four-ring	<i>Papilio demoleus</i> Linnaeus	Lime Butterfly
Nymphalidae			
<i>Argyreus hyperbius</i> (L.)	Indian Fritillary	<i>P. memnon</i> Linnaeus	Great Mormon
<i>Ariadne ariadne</i> (L.)	Angled Castor	<i>P. polymnestor</i> Cramer	Blue Mormon
<i>A. merione</i> (Cramer)	Common Castor	<i>P. polytes romulus</i> Cramer	Common Mormon
<i>Byblia ilithyia</i> (Drury)	Joker	<i>P. polytes stichius</i> Cramer	Common Mormon
<i>Charaxes solon</i> Fabricius (Fabr.)	Black Rajah	<i>Ornithoptera helena</i> (Linnaeus)	
<i>Cynthia cardui</i> (Linnaeus)	Painted Lady	<i>O. minos</i> Cramer	Common Birdwing
<i>Polyura arja</i> (Felder)	Pallid Nawab	Pieridae	
<i>P. athamas</i> (Drury)	Common Nawab	<i>Appias libythea</i> (Fabricius)	Striped Albatross
<i>Euthalia aconthia</i> Cramer (Moore)	Baron	<i>Capora nerissa</i> (Fabricius)	Common Gull
<i>Hypolimnas bolina</i> (Linnaeus)	Great Eggfly	<i>Catopsilia crocale</i> (Cramer)	Common Emigrant
<i>H. missippus</i> (Linnaeus)	Danaid Eggfly	<i>C. crocale pomona</i> (Fabricius)	Lemon Emigrant
<i>Kallima horshfieldi philarchus</i> (Westwood)	Blue Oak Leaf	<i>C. pyranthe</i> (Linnaeus)	Mottled Emigrant
<i>Neptis eurynome</i> Westwood		<i>C. pyranthe</i> (Linn.)-DSF <i>florella</i> (Fabricius)	African Emigrant
<i>Phalanta phalantha</i> (Drury)	Common Leopard	<i>Colotis calais</i> (Cramer)	Small Salmon Arab
<i>Precis almana</i> (Linnaeus)	Peacock Pansy	<i>C. danae</i> (Fabricius)	Crimson Tip
<i>P. altites</i> (L.)	Grey Pansy	<i>C. etrida</i> (Boisduval)	Little Orange Tip
<i>P. hierta</i> (Fabricius)	Yellow Pansy	<i>C. eucharis</i> (Fabricius)	Plain Orange Tip
<i>P. iphita</i> (Cramer)	Chocolate Pansy	<i>C. fausta</i> (Olivier)	Large Salmon Arab
<i>P. lemonias</i> (Linnaeus)	Lemon Pansy	<i>Delias eucharis</i> (Drury)	Common Jezebel
<i>P. orithyia</i> (L.)	Blue Pansy	<i>Eurema blanda silhetana</i> (Wallace)	Three-spot Grass Yellow
<i>Symphhaedra nais</i> (Forster)	Baronet	<i>E. hecabae</i> Linnaeus	Common Grass Yellow
Acraeidae			
<i>Acraea violae</i> (Fabricius)	Tawny Castor	<i>E. laeta</i> (Boisduval)	Spotless Grass Yellow
Lycaenidae			
<i>Anthene lycaenina</i> Felder	Pointed Ciliate Blue	<i>Ixiaria marianne</i> (Cramer)	White Orange Tip
<i>Aphanaeus minima</i>		<i>I. pyrene</i> (Linnaeus)	Yellow Orange Tip
<i>Castalius rosimon</i> (Fabricius)	Common Pierrot	<i>Pieris canidia</i> (Sparman)	Indian Cabbage White
<i>Catochrysops strabo</i> (Fabricius)	Forget-Me-Not	Hesperiidae	
<i>Celastrinia limbata</i> (Moore)	Plain Hedge Blue	<i>Amphitta diosorioides</i> (Fabricius)	Bush Hoppers
<i>Chilades laius</i> (Cramer)	Lime Blue	<i>Badamia exclamatoris</i> (Fabricius)	Brown Awl
<i>Curetis siva</i>	Shiva's Sunbeam	<i>Ganagara thyrasis</i> (Fabricius)	Giant Red Eye
<i>C. theltis gloriosa</i> Moore	Indian Sunbeam	<i>Hasora chromus chromus</i> (Cramer)	Common Branded Awl
<i>Deudorix epijarbas</i> (Moore)	Cornelian	<i>Hyarotis adrastus</i> (Cramer)	Tree Flitter
<i>Euchrysops cnejus</i> (Fabricius)	Gram Blue	<i>Iambrix salsala</i> (Moore)	Chestnut Bob
<i>Jamides bochus</i> (Cramer)	Dark Cerulean	<i>Pelopidas mathias</i> (Fabricius)	Small Branded Swift
<i>Lampides boeticus</i> (Linnaeus)	Pea Blue	<i>Spialia galba</i> (Fabricius)	Indian Skipper
<i>Narathura (Eumolpus) amantes</i> (Hewitson)	Large Oak Blue	<i>Suastrus gremius</i> (Fabricius)	Indian Palm Bob
<i>Rapala iarbas sorya</i> (Kollar)	Indian Red Flash	<i>Tagiades litigiosa</i> Moschler	Water Snow Flat
<i>R. varuna</i> (Hors.)	Indigo Flash	<i>Taractrocera maevius</i> (Fabricius)	Common Grass Dart
		<i>Telicota augias</i> (Linnaeus)	Pale Palm Dart
		<i>Thoressa honorei</i> (de Nicelle)	Madras Ace
		<i>Udaspes folus</i> (Cramer)	Grass Demon

* As per Varshney (1983)

** As per Wynter-Blyth (1957) and Varshney (1973, 1985 and 1990)