

A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE BUTTERFLIES OF LONAR CRATER LAKE, BULDHANA DISTRICT, MAHARASHTRA

Muhammed Jafer Palot¹ and V.P. Soniya²

¹ Western Ghats Field Research Station, Zoological Survey of India, Kozhikode, Kerala 673002, India.

² Freshwater Biological Station, Zoological Survey of India, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh 500020, India.

Lonar Lake (19°59'N & 74°34'E) is situated about 165km from Aurangabad town within Parbani quadrangle in Buldhana District of Maharashtra State. This is the only crater in basaltic rock formed by the meteoritic impact in India, ranking third largest in the world. The Lonar Crater has a circular outline with a diameter of 1,830m and a depth of 150m with steep vertical slopes. The maximum elevation of the area is 669m and the minimum is 670m. Principal vegetation of the area is of a dry deciduous type on the crater, dry bushy vegetation on the rim and slopes, moist deciduous components along the bank of perennial stream and salt tolerant vegetation along the lake shore. The temperature fluctuates between 6°C to 43°C from winter to summer.

Voluminous information has been generated on the geochemistry and water quality parameters of this unique lake system (Badve *et al.*, 1993; Anonymous, 1999). Very few works have been done on the flora and fauna of this habitat. While conducting hydrobiological studies on the Lonar Lake from 1-7 November 2000, we collected and maintained a record of the butterflies of the area from the Crater's different environs. The butterflies observed were segregated into categories such as common (C), uncommon (UC) and rare (R) based on their occurrence during the survey.

A total of 48 species of butterflies were recorded under five families (Table 1). The family Nymphalidae and Pieridae were found dominant with 19 and 15 species respectively, followed by Lycaenidae (9 species), Papilionidae (4 species) and a single species from the family Hesperidae. The abundance of Pierids in the locality may be due to the availability of plenty of its larval food plants of the family Capparaceae. Most of the species observed were common and widely distributed. The butterflies were identified following Wynter-Blyth (1957) and Kunte (2000).

Table 1. Systematic list of Butterflies of Lonar Crater Lake, Buldhana District, Maharashtra State, India.

Scientific name	Common name	Status
<u>Papilionidae</u>		
<i>Pachliopta aristolochiae</i> (Fabricius)	Common Rose	C
<i>Graphium agamemnon</i> (Linnaeus)	Tailed Jay	UC
<i>Papilio demoleus</i> (Linnaeus)	Lime Butterfly	C
<i>Papilio polytes</i> (Linnaeus)	Common Mormon	C
<u>Pieridae</u>		
<i>Catopsilia pomona</i> (Fabricius)	Common Emigrant	C
<i>Catopsilia pyranthe</i> (Linnaeus)	Mottled Emigrant	C
<i>Eurema brigitta rubella</i> (Wallace)	Small Yellow	R
<i>Eurema hecabe</i> (Moore)	Common Grass Yellow	C
<i>Eurema blanda</i> (Boisduval)	Three-spot Grass Yellow	UC
<i>Leptosia nina</i> (Fabricius)	Psyche	C
<i>Cepora nerissa</i> (Fabricius)	Common Gull	C
<i>Anapheis aurota</i> (Fabricius)	Caper White Pioneer	C
<i>Colotis amata</i>	Small Salmon Arab	UC
<i>Colotis etrida</i> (Boisduval)	Little Orange Tip	R
<i>Colotis eucharis</i> (Fabricius)	Plain Orange Tip	UC
<i>Colotis danae</i> (Fabricius)	Crimson Tip	UC
<i>Colotis fausta</i> (Olivier)	Salmon Arab	UC
<i>Ixias marianne</i> (Cramer)	White Orange Tip	R
<i>Paronnia valeria</i> (Cramer)	Common Wanderer	UC
<u>Nymphalidae</u>		
<u>Satyrinae</u>		
<i>Melanitis leda</i> (Linnaeus)	Common Evening Brown	C
<i>Mycalesis perseus</i> (Fabricius)	Common Bush Brown	C
<i>Ypthima huebneri</i> Kirby	Common Four Ring	UC
<u>Charaxinae</u>		
<i>Polyura athamas</i> (Drury)	Common Nawab	R
<u>Heliconiinae</u>		
<i>Acraea violae</i> (Fabricius)	Tawny Coster	UC
<i>Phalanta phalantha</i> (Drury)	Leopard Butterfly	UC
<i>Neptis hylas</i> Moore	Common Sailor	C
<i>Euthalia nais</i> (Forster)	Red Baron/Baronet	C
<i>Ariadne merione</i> Cramer	Common Castor	C
<i>Junonia hierta</i> Fabricius	Yellow Pansy	C
<i>Junonia orithya</i> Linnaeus	Blue Pansy	R
<i>Junonia almana almana</i> (Linnaeus)	Peacock Pansy	C
<i>Junonia atlites</i> (Linnaeus)	Grey Pansy	R
<i>Junonia iphita</i> Cramer	Chocolate Pansy	UC
<i>Hypolimnas misippus</i> (Linnaeus)	Danaid Eggfly	C
<u>Danainae</u>		
<i>Tirumala limniace</i> Cramer	Blue Tiger	C
<i>Tirumala septentrionis</i> (Butler)	Dark Blue Tiger	R
<i>Danaus chrysippus</i> (Linnaeus)	Plain or Common Tiger	C
<i>Euploea core</i> (Cramer)	Common Crow	C
<u>Lycaenidae</u>		
<i>Castalius rosimon</i> (Fabricius)	Common Pierrot	C
<i>Leptotes plinius</i> (Fabricius)	Zebra Blue	UC
<i>Azonus ubaldus</i> (Cramer)	Bright Babul Blue	C
<i>Pseudozeeria maha</i> Kollar	Pale Grass Blue	C

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Scientific name	Common name	Status
<i>Zizula hylax</i> (Fabricius)	Tiny Grass Blue	UC
<i>Chilades pandava</i> (Horsefield)	Plains Cupid	C
<i>Freyeria trochylus</i> Freyer	Grass Jewel	UC
<i>Jamides celeno</i> (Cramer)	Common Cerulean	C
<i>Spindasis ictis</i> (Hewitson)	Shot Silverline	R
Hesperiidae		
<i>Suastus gremius</i> (Fabricius)	Indian Palm Bob	UC

C - Common; UC - uncommon; R - rare

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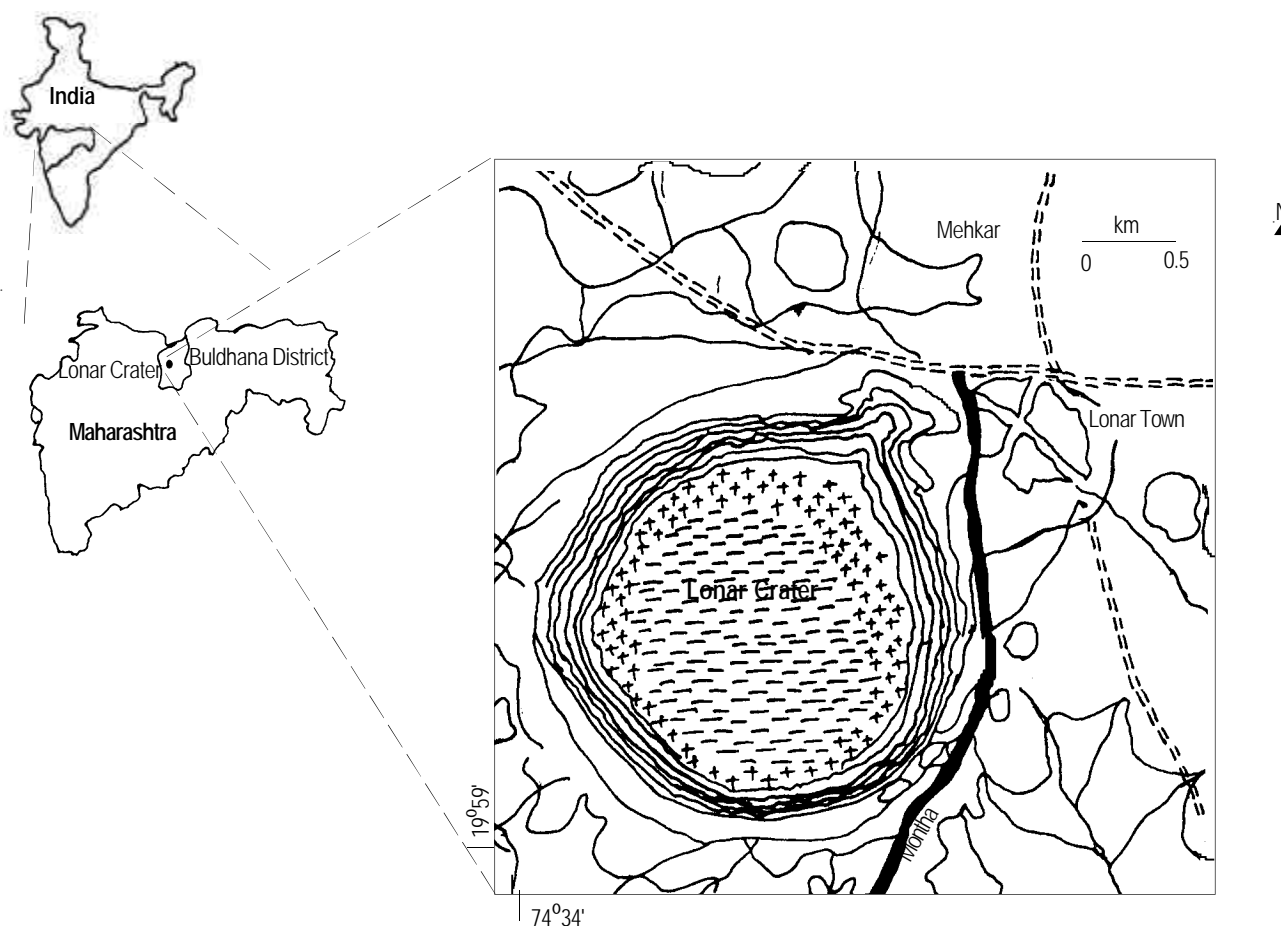


Fig. 1. Location map of Lonar Crater Lake, Buldhana District, Maharashtra