Lepidoptera of Nariva Swamp

By M.J.W. Cock Commonwealth Institute of Biological Control, Curepe, Trinidad

RECENTLY, I examined the Studies on the Biological Resources of Nariva Swamp, Trinidad by Bacon et al. (1979) put out as Occasional Paper Number 4 of the Zoology Department, UWI. While the bulk of this work makes most interesting reading (and I recommend it to members of the Field Naturalists' Club), I was soon turning to the faunal list of Appendix 8, and examining the list of Lepidoptera (pp. 405 - 7) — this being one of my particular interests. I have to admit that I was disappointed, although the quality of this section gives no measure of the quality of the rest of the work.

Of the 36 species listed, eight are mis-spelt, one is a synonym, one is an old name no longer used, and five or six species and one aberration must be regarded as probable misidentifications. Although left as a question mark, the family to which Lycorea ceres belongs is Danaidae, as is readily ascertainable. The order in which the families are listed appears to be random. The correct order for the families listed should approximate to Uraniidae, Hesperidae, Papilionidae, Pieridae, Lycaenidae, Riodinidae, Nymphalidae, Heliconiidae, Morphidae, Brasso-lidae, Satyridae, Ithomiidae, Danaidae, as could have been found by consulting a text-book of entomology.

The incorrect spellings are: —

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incorrect Spelling</th>
<th>Correct Spelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HESPERIIDAE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Cologilopsis musa&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Cobalopsis musa&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIERIDAE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Eurema venarta&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Eurema venusta&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYMPHALIDAE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Anartia amathea&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Anartia amathea&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Phepona meander&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Prepona meander&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Branded king shoemaker&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Banded king shoemaker&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Billis hypera&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Biblis hyperia&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRASSOLIDAE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Cubotelpia beucynthia&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Catoblepis berecynthia&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Dynastor macrosiris&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Dynastor macrosiris&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITHOMIIDAE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Aceea eurymedia agna&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Aeria eurymedia agna&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cobalopsis musa is a synonym of Arita arita Schaus; while Cystineura cana is now known as Mestra nypernestra cana Erich.

The species needing confirmation which are probably mis-identified are: —

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HESPERIIDAE</th>
<th>One of a group of similar species.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arita arita (&quot;Cobalopsis musa&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIERIDAE</td>
<td>A forest species of the Northern Range.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eurema gratiosa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIODINIDAE</td>
<td>A rare species normally found in the south. Several similar species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nymphidium onaeum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calociasma lilina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYMPHALIDAE</td>
<td>A very rare species normally on hilltops of the Northern Range.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metamorpha epaphus</td>
<td>First record outside Northern Range but this species is spreading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepona meander</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HELICONIIDAE</td>
<td>Not normally seen below 1,000 feet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heliconius ethillus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRASSOLIDAE</td>
<td>A very rare species normally only taken at light.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynastor macrosiris</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITHOMIIDAE</td>
<td>An aberration in Trinidad only taken once previously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothyris euclaus forbesi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, I would like to include a list of butterflies which I have collected from the area to the west of milestone 46 of the Manzanilla-Mayaro Road extending to the Nariva River Bridge. The list makes no attempt at completeness (except for the Hesperidae) since the records only reflect species taken owing to my interest in them.

HESPERIIDAE

Pyrrhopyge amycle amycle Cramer 16 September '79
P/o/yth/riv/ox o/tocma/ctu/a
octomaculata Sepp
1q June '79; Sept. '79
P. auginus Hewiston
1q March '79
Urbanus proteus proteus Linnaeus
1q September '79
U. esmeraldis Butler
1q February '80
U. simplicitius Stoll
1q September '79
U. proce Plotz
26 March '79
Nisoniades rubescens Moschler
16 June '70
Pellicia dimiditata dimiditata
Herrich-Shaeffer
1q March '79
Gorgythygon begga pyralina
Moschler
1q Sept. '79, 1q Feb. '80
Timochaes trifasciata trifasciata
Hewiston
1q March '79, 2q Sept. '79
Chiomera asychis simon Evans

Corticea corticea corticea Plotz
Masicetes hiceaean Godman
4q February '80
Papias sp. nr. dictys Godman
1q September '79
Meriana ancillaris ancillaris
Butler
2q February '80
Enosis angularis angularis
Moschler
1q February '80
Argos argus Moschler
1q February '80
Carystedus phorcu phoracus Cramer
1q February '80
Phlebodes sp. nr. torax Evans

Quinta canae Herrich-Shaeffer
1q March '79
Wallengrenia druryi curassavica
1q March '79
Panoquina ocola Edward
1q March '79

LYCAENIDAE

"Thela" hesperitis Butler
1q March '79
"Thecla" eckion Linnaeus
1q March '79
"Thecla" merys Linnaeus
1q September '79
"Leptotes cassius Cramer
1q September '79

RIODINIDAE

Nymphidium molpe Hubner
1q 1q February '80
HELICONIDAE

"Dryadula phaetusa Linnaeus
2q March '79

A number of comments are worth making on the above list of my captures of Lepidoptera.

1. It is massively incomplete. In particular no moths are included.

2. It is heavily biased towards Hesperiidae owing to my interest in this family.

3. Dryadula phaetusa (The Caroni Flambeau) — this is probably the furthest North this species now occurs in Trinidad.

4. The following species are additions to the list of Trinidad butterflies given by Barcant (1970) (based on that of Kaye (1921) for the Hesperiidae) although recorded by Evans (1951 — 56) from Trinidad. U. esmeraldis, U. proceae, M. hicetaceon, L. ancillaris. The other species which do not appear in Barcant (1970) are the correct names of some of the species he lists.

5. The following species, although recorded by Kaye, are not in the British Museum collection as recorded by Evans (1951 — 56) and thus confirm the species as occurring in Trinidad. P. octomaculata, E. angularis.

6. I have not been able to identify with certainty the Phlebodes sp. and the Papias sp. They may well be new to science and if so, represent the only butterflies endemic to the Nariva Swamp, Trinidad.

A further record for Nariva Swamp is given in Barcant (1979, p. 124). Many who have read Barcant's Butterflies of Trinidad and Tobago will recall his account of a visit to Bush-Bush in which he describes the capture of nearly a hundred specimens of Helicopis cupido Linnaeus (Riodinidae). This is another record for Nariva Swamp of a very local, typical swamp butterfly. It is also a good example of the sort of collecting that is not required in a wildlife sanctuary.

The shortcomings of our knowledge of the butterflies of Nariva Swamp are all too apparent. Yet, for the Nariva Swamp, butterflies are comparatively well-known and our knowledge of most other insect groups is negligible. This makes only too clear the need for a long-term research programme on Nariva Swamp to include the insect fauna. To this end, the establishment of a field station on Bush-Bush by UWI is to be highly recommended. Assistance towards a more complete study of the flora and fauna is one area where perhaps the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club could be of assistance particularly where club members do have extensive knowledge of Trinidad's flora and fauna.

Let us hope that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago will heed this report and its lucid conclusions and recommendations and avert what could only be an ecological and conservation disaster if the alternative plan of the Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency of Japan should ever be put into operation.

REFERENCES


KAYE, W.J. (1940). Additions and corrections to the recorded species of Trinidad butterflies (Lepid. Rhop.). Transac­ tions of the Royal Entomological Society, London. 90, 551 — 73.