

Notes on butterflies of Saudi Arabia II

(Rhopalocera: Hesperidae, Pieridae, Lycaenidae and Nymphalidae)

by

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received 2.II.2024

Abstract: The second part of notes on butterflies of Saudi Arabia briefly reflects the results of the 2022 expedition to this country: four species were first recorded in Saudi Arabia and one species was first discovered on the Arabian Peninsula.

Acknowledgements: The author expresses his sincere gratitude to Dr. A. PAVLIČKO and Mr. M. PALKÁ for participating in a joint expedition to Saudi Arabia and finding new species in this country; Dr. R. VEROVNIK and Mr. M. AL-FAHAD for advice before the expedition.

In 2022, field research on butterflies in Saudi Arabia continued. The second expedition included the author of the article, Dr. A. PAVLIČKO (Prachatice) and Mr. M. PALKÁ (Prague). The route of the second expedition, like the first, took place in the southwestern part, but with a concentration on the provinces of Mecca and Al-Baha, which made it possible to expand our knowledge of the distribution of a number of species north of the already known areas. Four species were first recorded in Saudi Arabia, having previously only been recorded in Yemen or Oman on the Arabian Peninsula, and one African species was first recorded in both Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula as a whole. The following is a list of recently recorded species, with their locations and brief notes on their status and distribution. All material is stored in the author's collection.

Borbo fatuellus (HOPFFER, 1855) (fig. 1)

♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Faifa, Al Khashah vic., 650 m, 19. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

This species is widespread in tropical Africa and has only been recorded once in Yemen (see LARSEN, 1983, 1984) in October. First discovered in Saudi Arabia in March, expanding both the known distribution in Arabia and the flight period.

Spialia bifida (HIGGINS, 1924) (figs. 2-3)

♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Khatwat Al Ain vic., 1420 m, 20. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Al Gabal & Al Asoad vic., "Black Mountains", 1740 m, 21. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

♂, Saudi Arabia, Makkah Province, road Jeddah – Taif, 1660 m, 27. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

Until recently, the taxon *bifida* was considered a subspecies of the South Asian *S. zebra* (BUTLER, 1888). ZHANG et al. (2020) raised the status of African *S. bifida* (HIGGINS) populations to the species level based on differences in the structure of ♀ genitalia. However, the status of Arab populations is not entirely clear and requires further study. Here, Arab populations are tentatively assigned to African *S. bifida* (HIGGINS) based on geographic proximity. *S. bifida* (HIGGINS) is quite widespread in the south and east of the Arabian Peninsula from southwest Saudi Arabia and Yemen to the UAE.

Belenois gidica (GODART, 1819) (fig. 4-5)

♂, Saudi Arabia, Asir Province, Ahad Tharban vic., 270 m, 14. III. 2022, A. PAVLIČKO leg.

♂, Saudi Arabia, Asir Province, Ahad Tharban vic., 270 m, 14. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

This is the first record in the Arabian Peninsula. Only two males of this African species were caught in a dry, rocky river bed. The butterflies have a less pronounced dark pattern on the wings, unlike African populations, and may represent an undescribed subspecies.

Libythea laius TRIMEN, 1879 (fig. 6-7)

♂, Saudi Arabia, Asir Province, Habel vic., 510 m, 15. III. 2022, M. PALKÁ leg.

♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Al Jazza'h, 830 m, 16. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Khatwat Al Ain vic., 1380 m, 22. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

On the Arabian Peninsula, only two specimens of this species were so far known, collected in Yemen (TURLIN, 2000). The first ♂ *Libythea* in Saudi Arabia was collected by M. PALKÁ. In the following days, the author collected 2 ♂♂ more in places quite distant from the first locality.

Zizina antanossa (MABILLE, 1877) (fig. 8-10)

4♂, ♀, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Harub vic., 470 m, 17. III. 2022.

♀, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, 277 m, 17°10'09.15"N, 43°02'14.03"E, 1. X. 2021, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

Zizina antanossa (MAB.) in the Arabian Peninsula was known only from Yemen. The author caught the first ♀ in Saudi Arabia during his first trip in 2021, but correct identification required confirmation from a large number of specimens. During the second visit to Saudi Arabia, a small series was collected, which included ♂♂, the reliability of whose identification is beyond doubt.

The first "Notes on Butterflies of Saudi Arabia" (TSHIKOLOVETS, 2022) indicated several species that were also found during the second trip, but in other, often very distant places. These species are listed below, and the new locations expand their known ranges.

Chloroselas esmeralda bilqis T. LARSEN, 1983

♀, Saudi Arabia, Makkah Province, road Jeddah – Taif, 1110 m, 21°01'16"N, 40°06'28"E, 10. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

♀, Saudi Arabia, Makkah Province, road Jeddah – Taif, 1660 m, 21°05'41"N, 40°15'36"E, 10. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Alasha Masjid vic., 600 m, 19. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

♂, Saudi Arabia, Al Bāhah Province, Al Azaherah, 1790 m, 25. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

Cupidopsis jobates (HOPFFER, 1855)

♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Harub vic., 470 m, 17. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

***Byblia ilithyia* (DRURY, 1773)**

♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Harub vic., 470 m, 17. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

♀, Saudi Arabia, Asir Province, Al Batilah vic., 685 m, 14. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

***Charaxes bernstorffi* RYDON, 1982**

♀, Saudi Arabia, Asir Province, Habel vic., 510 m, 15. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

♂, Saudi Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Harub vic., 470 m, 17. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Al Jawah vic., 215 m, 18. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

♀, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Khatwat Al Ain vic., 1420 m, 20. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg.

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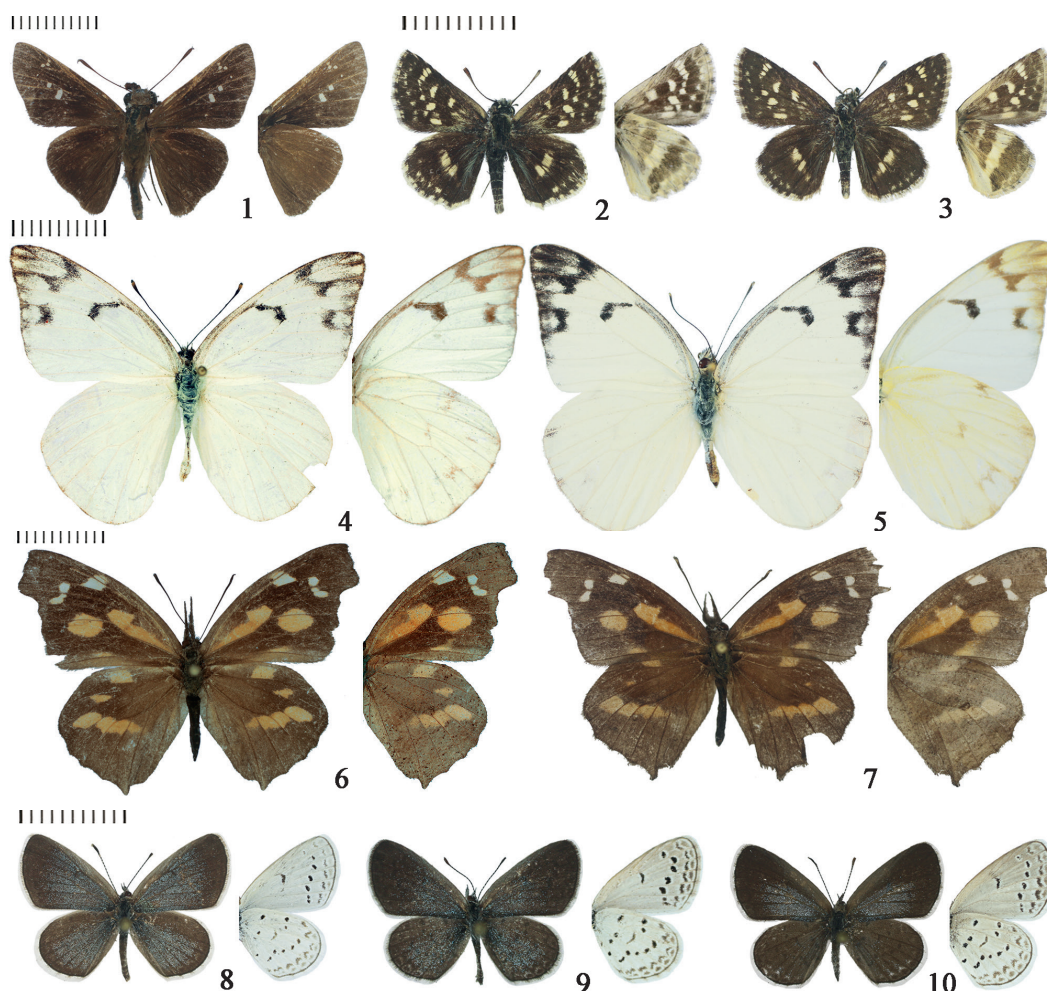


Fig. 1: *Borbo fatuellus* (HOPFFER, 1855); ♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Faifa, Al Khashah vic., 650 m, 19. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg. et coll.

Fig. 2-3: *Spialia bifida* (HIGGINS, 1924); ♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Khatwat Al Ain vic., 1420 m, 20. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg. et coll.; ♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Al Gabal & Al Asoad vic., "Black Mountains", 1740 m, 21. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg. et coll.

Fig. 4-5: *Belenois gidica* (GODART, 1819); ♂, Saudi Arabia, Asir Province, Ahad Tharban vic., 270 m, 14. III. 2022, A. PAVLIČKO leg., coll. V. Tshikolovets; ♂, Saudi Arabia, Asir Province, Ahad Tharban vic., 270 m, 14. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg. et coll.

Fig. 6-7: *Libythea laius* Trimen, 1879; ♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Khatwat Al Ain vic., 1380 m, 22. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg. et coll.; ♂, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Al Jazza'h, 830 m, 16. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg. et coll.

Fig. 8-10: *Zizina antanossa* (Mabille, 1877); (8, 9) ♂, (10) ♀, Saudi Arabia, Jāzān Province, Harub vic., 470 m, 17. III. 2022, V. TSHIKOLOVETS leg. et coll. Scale: 1 cm.

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Zeitschrift/Journal: [Atalanta](#)

Jahr/Year: 2024

Band/Volume: [55_1-2](#)

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