

Confirmation of the type locality of *Pintara tabrica* (HEWITSON, 1873) (Hesperiidae) on the Indian subcontinent and its distribution in Vietnam

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Abstract: *Pintara tabrica* (HEWITSON, 1873) is reported from Bhutan, confirming the validity of the type locality in Darjeeling, West Bengal, India. Records (from literature and observation) are provided for India: West Bengal, Bhutan, Myanmar and northern Vietnam. The presence of the species in southern Vietnam is shown to be unlikely, due to probable mislabelling of the allotype in London.

Bestätigung des Typenfundorts von *Pintara tabrica* (HEWITSON, 1873) (Hesperiidae) auf dem Indischen Subkontinent und zur Verbreitung der Art in Vietnam

Zusammenfassung: *Pintara tabrica* (HEWITSON, 1873) wird erstmals gemeldet von Bhutan, was den Typenfundort Darjeeling, West-Bengal, Indien, bestätigt. Verbreitungspunkte für folgende Orte werden gegeben (Literatur und eigene Beobachtung): West-Bengal (Indien), Bhutan, Myanmar und das nördliche Vietnam. Das Vorkommen der Art im südlichen Vietnam ist hingegen sehr unwahrscheinlich und beruht vermutlich auf einer Fehletikettierung des einzigen Belegs (Allotypus) in London.

Introduction

The species *Pterigospidea tabrica* HEWITSON, 1873 was described on the basis of a unique ♂ in HEWITSON's collection, which was obtained from ROBERTS from "Darjeeling" (= Darjeeling, W. Bengal, India). Subsequently, EVANS (1932) proposed the genus *Pintara* with the taxon *pinwilli* BUTLER, 1877 as type, although he treated *pinwilli* as a subspecies of *P. tabrica* at the time. This was done because *P. tabrica* was known only from the unique holotype whereas *pinwilli* was a well-known taxon from "Assam" to Borneo.

EVANS (1949) raised *pinwilli* to a full species and discussed doubts about the provenance of the unique specimen of *tabrica* from Darjeeling, going so far as to suggest that the single ♂ type in the Natural History Museum, London, was "probably from Indo-China", since there is a ♀ in the same collection from "Laokai, Cochin-China". VARSHNEY & SMETACEK (2015) followed this treatment in the absence of any further developments in the matter, including *P. tabrica tabrica* provisionally in the list of Indian butterflies.

EVANS (1949) divided the species into three subspecies, one being the nominotypical subspecies above, the second *P. tabrica melli* (HERING, 1918) from SE China and lastly, *P. tabrica bowringi* (JOICEY & TALBOT, 1921) from the island of Hainan. DEVYATKIN (1998) raised *bowringi* to species rank and described a subspecies under it from Vietnam.

Observation

On 22. VI. 2017, an individual of *Pintara tabrica tabrica* was photographed by CHEKU at Khrangdung (27°11' 41.5" N, 90°32'31.3" E; 1133 m above sealevel), Korphu block, Trongsa, in Central Bhutan under the conservational jurisdiction of Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park (see Figs. 1, 2). It was settled on the underside of a cardamom leaf. It was a bright sunny day around 10:42 h BST and the butterfly sat in the same position for about 10 minutes. After that, it flew off and was not seen again. The subtropical broadleaf forest there has a seasonal stream, dry at the time, where the individual was observed basking along with many other butterflies. The individual was not collected.



Fig. 1: *Pintara tabrica tabrica*, Bhutan. — Photo: CHEKU. — Fig. 2: Habitat of *Pintara tabrica* in Bhutan. — Photo: Sanjit RAI.

Discussion and conclusion

The present record confirms the presence of *P. tabrica* on the Indian subcontinent, confirms the validity of the type locality of the taxon and extends the known distribution to Bhutan. *P. tabrica tabrica* therefore extends from India (Darjeeling, West Bengal) to Bhutan, Myanmar (Kachin) (INAYOSHI 2018: “June, leg. Prasobsuk SUKKIT”) and Vietnam, for there is a ♀ in the Natural History Museum, London, from “Laokai, Cochin-China” (EVANS 1949, DEVYATKIN 1998).

This locality almost certainly refers to the present day city and province of Lao Cai, where MONASTYRSKII & DEVYATKIN (2015) recorded *P. tabrica*. However, “Cochin-China” referred to the southern province of Vietnam, while Lao Cai lies in what was then known as Tonkin in the North. So it was not obviously the Darjeeling specimen that was wrongly labeled, but, in fact, the ♀ from Vietnam.

Meanwhile, DEVYATKIN (1998) proceeded on the assumption that the locality “Cochin-China” was correct and stated that the species was known from “southern Vietnam”. Subsequently, DEVYATKIN & MONASTYRSKII (2002) recorded *P. tabrica* from Cuc Phuong, which is a national park in the Red River Delta south of Hanoi.

There is no reliably known specimen of this species from South Vietnam or Cochin-China. It is very likely, therefore, that the butterfly has never been recorded from “Cochin-China” or southern Vietnam, as suggested by the label of the allotype in the Natural History Museum, London.

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to Gopal Krishna BALIGA, Mangalore, India, for identification of the species.

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Received: 20. IX. 2018

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Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Nachrichten des Entomologischen Vereins Apollo](#)

Jahr/Year: 2018

Band/Volume: [39](#)

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Artikel/Article: [Confirmation of the type locality of *Pintara tabrica* \(Hewitson, 1873\) \(Hesperiidae\) on the Indian subcontinent and its distribution in Vietnam 107-108](#)