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Newsletter of the Invertebrate Conservation & Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA)

First record of Variable Malayan Butterfly from Chota Nagpur Plateau (Purulia), West Bengal, India

The butterfly *Megisba malaya* is commonly known as Malayan belonging to Lycaenidae family of superfamily Papilionidae (Kehimkar 2016).

The species *Megisba malaya* was first reported by Horsfield in 1828. In India, three subspecies of this butterfly are found namely *Megisba malaya thwaitesi* (Tailless Malayan), *Megisba malaya sikkima* (Variable Malayan) reported by Moore in 1881 and 1884 respectively and *Megisba malaya presbyter* (Andaman Malayan) reported by Fruhstorfer in 1918 and anonymous 2021.



Variable Malayan Butterfly photographed from Ajodhya Hills, Purulia, West Bengal.

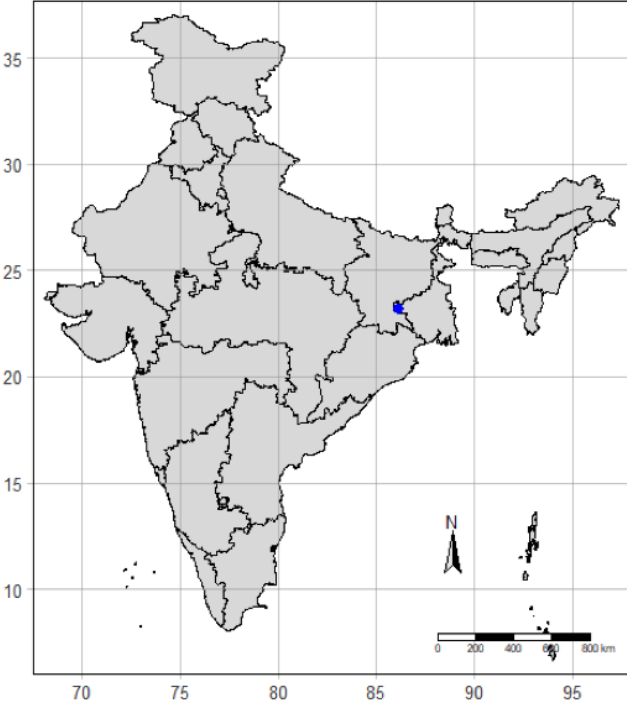
Present study is the first documented report of *Megisba malaya sikkima* (Variable Malayan) from Chota Nagpur Plateau (Purulia). During field survey on 14 August 2020, the butterfly *Megisba malaya sikkima* was recorded from Ajodhya Hills located in Purulia District.

The butterfly was photographed using Nikon Coolpix P600. The specimen was not captured. The butterfly was identified as *Megisba malaya sikkima* on the basis of four similar basal spots on UNH (Evans 1932; Wynter-Blyth 1957; Kehimkar 2016). The

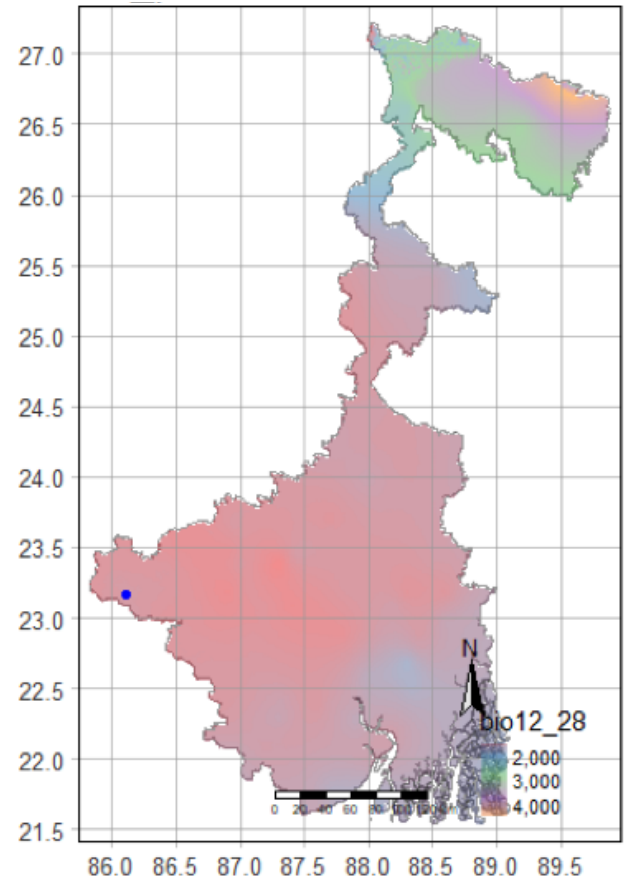
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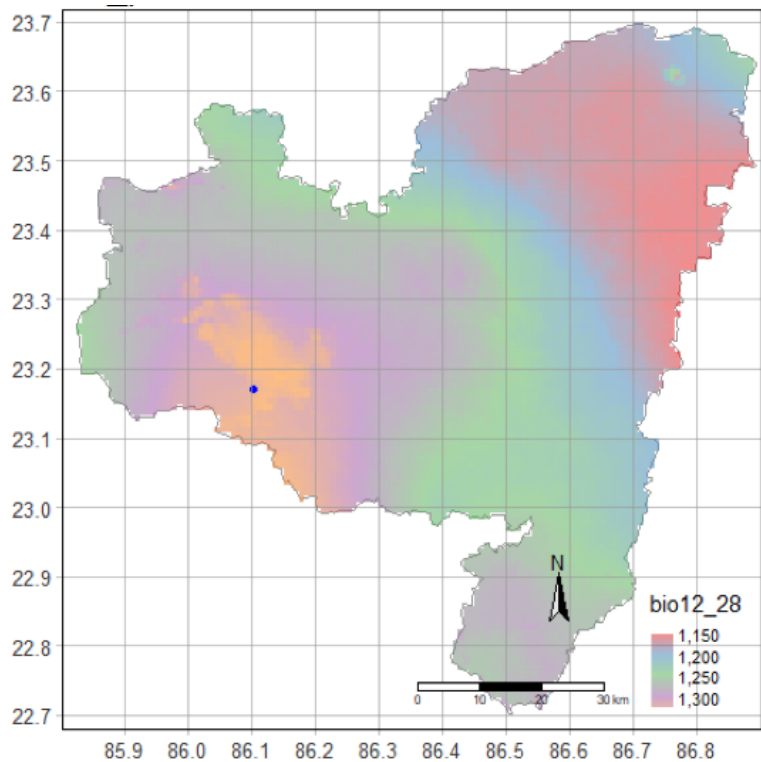
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India map showing Purulia District.



Map of West Bengal showing the locality of the observation.



Map of Purulia District with observation site.

Coordinates of the site from where Variable Malayan Butterfly was photographed plotted on all the maps



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photograph was uploaded in Butterflies of India website with media code fa393. The coordinates (86.104E, 23.170N) of the site from where the butterfly was photographed were plotted in raster plot that is done by using R Studio 3.6.3 (R Studio Team 2020) (Figure 1a,b,c).

In India, the Malayan Butterfly is reported from Eastern Ghats, Western Ghats, West Bengal, Uttaranchal, Arunachal Pradesh, and northeastern part of India (Kehimkar 2016). Apart from India, this butterfly is also found in Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka (Kehimkar 2016). Wet forests in lower altitudes are preferred by this butterfly and it is mostly seen in forest edges and bushes and fly close to the ground (Kehimkar 2016). In West Bengal the butterfly species were found in Alipurduar, south 24 Parganas, Nadia, Jalpaiguri, and Uttar Dinajpur District (Anonymous 2021). This is the first report of this butterfly from Chota Nagpur Plateau (Purulia) in written form. The present documentation of the Variable Malayan from a different ecoregion will help in selecting conservation strategy for this butterfly species.

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