

D-70: Survey of butterfly fauna of Knuckles region

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A field survey was carried out to identify and document the butterfly fauna of Knuckles region ($7^{\circ} 18'N$, $7^{\circ} 34'N$, $80^{\circ} 41'E$ and $80^{\circ} 55'E$; area 182 km_2)
Observations were taken at 14 localities representing different altitudinal

levels (250 m - 1,850 m) of this mountain range. Collection of field data was done for a period of 6 months: January & June-October, 1991. Butterflies were captured for identification using a home-made entomological net (frame 40 cm diameter, 60 cm deep, small-mesh type and 1 m handle). Recordings were done along 100 m transects in each locality. A transect included 11 recording points at 10 m intervals. Fifteen minutes were spent at each point starting at 9.00 and all the localities were visited in every month mentioned (a total of 84 transects).

Results show the presence of 67 species of butterflies belonging to the families Danaidae (8 species), Satyridae (5 species), Nymphalidae (20 species), Lycaenidae (11 species), Peridae (10 species) and Papilionidae (13 species). Altogether 14 species were endemic to Sri Lanka and 17 species were reported to be threatened. The commonest butterflies recorded in 10 or more localities were: *Appias albina dardata*, *Cupha erymanthis placida*, *Danaus aglea aglea*, *Euploea coreasela*, *Hebomonina glaucippe australis*, *Neptis hylas varmona*, *Papilio polytus romulus*, *Papilio polymnestor parinda*, *Polydorus hector* and *Troides helena darsinus*.

The study revealed the diverse nature of butterfly fauna of this isolated mountain range, probably, brought about by extreme biogeographical variations of the Knuckles region.