





ISSN 0974-7907 (Online); ISSN 0974-7893 (Print)

Publisher
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www.wild.zooreach.org

Host
Zoo Outreach Organization
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Cover: Fish species recorded in the Gowthami-Godavari Estuary, Andhra Pradesh: *Lutjanus johnii* (top left), *Triacanthus biaculeatus* (top right), *Acentrogobius cyanomos*, *Elops machnata*, *Trypauchen vagina*, *Oxyurichthys microlepis*. © Paromita Ray.



New distribution record of *Gazalina chrysolopha* Kollar, 1844 (Lepidoptera: Notodontidae) in the Trans-Himalayan region of western Nepal

Ashant Dewan¹ , Bimal Raj Shrestha² , Rubina Thapa Magar³ & Prakash Gaudel⁴

¹Department of Zoology, Amrit Campus, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, 44600 Nepal.

²Biodiversity Research and Conservation Society, Kathmandu, Nepal.

^{3,4}Central Department of Zoology, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, 44600 Nepal.

¹d1.ashant@gmail.com (corresponding author), ²bimalrsta9@gmail.com, ³thaparubna543@gmail.com, ⁴prakash.gaudel2@gmail.com

Gazalina chrysolopha Kollar, 1844 is a moth belonging to the family Notodontidae. Genus *Gazalina* was described by Walker in 1865 which contributes a total of three species with other two *G. apsara* and *G. transversa*, to the moth inventory of Nepal (Smith 2010). Haruta (1993) collected *G. chrysolopha* from Godawari (1,600 m) south-east of Kathmandu. During another expedition, this moth was recorded from Dagchu (2,880 m) and Jiri (2,340 m) in eastern Nepal (Haruta 1994). Hampson (1892) described the northwestern Himalaya and Sikkim as their major habitat. The caterpillar of *G. chrysolopha* is a major pest of the oak forest causing heavy defoliation (Rahaman 1992). It has been found to defoliate the shade tree (*Alnus nepalensis*) of large cardamom so severely that it exposes the undergrowing cardamom to excess sunshine, frost, and other weather conditions (Srivastava 2003). Amongst three *Gazalina* species in Nepal, *G. chrysolopha* remains the strongest suspect to cause of corneal melting eye disease called Seasonal Hyperacute Panuveitis (SHAPU), reported only in Nepal (Upadhyay et al. 2020; Gurung et al. 2021). Monsoon season is considered the favorable period

for the completion of their biological cycle (Gurung et al. 2021). As a result, the species prefer areas that get regular monsoons like western regions of Nepal such as Kaski and its neighboring districts causing the disease SHAPU in most (Upadhyay et al. 2020).

During an opportunistic survey on 28–29 August 2021, 10 individuals of *G. chrysolopha* were recorded in the Mustang district (28.770°N & 83.727°E, 2,885 m). The district is also a part of a trans-Himalayan region that falls under the Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA). Moths were observed nearby light sources in the daytime in resting position on a wall, window glass, and partially damaged wings on the ground. Capturing of moth was not done to avoid any risk of contamination due to lack of proper equipment and photographed in a natural position to observe wing mark patterns. Identification was based on Hampson (1892) and Haruta (1993). *G. chrysolopha* differs from other sibling species in the fore wing having an indistinct sub-basal black line: a streak along median nervure; two slightly waved medial oblique lines beyond which the veins are black; the thorax and collar are tinged with fulvous (Hampson

Editor: Jatishwor Singh Irungbam, Sphingidae Museum, Pribram, Czech Republic.

Date of publication: 26 August 2022 (online & print)

Citation: Dewan, A., B.R. Shrestha, R.T. Magar & P. Gaudel (2022). New distribution record of *Gazalina chrysolopha* Kollar, 1844 (Lepidoptera: Notodontidae) in the Trans-Himalayan region of western Nepal. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 14(8): 21742–21744. <https://doi.org/10.11609/jott.7976.14.8.21742-21744>

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Funding: None.

Competing interests: The authors declare no competing interests.

Acknowledgements: This finding has become possible under the butterfly research project “Exploring butterfly species richness and their distribution patterns along the altitudinal gradients in trans-Himalayan region, Nepal” in the Mustang district funded by Nagao Natural Environment Foundation, Japan. Our principal thanks go to the foundation. We would also like to thank the Department of National park and Wildlife Conservation and National Trust for Nature Conservation-Annapurna Conservation Area Project for providing research permission.





Image 1,2. *Gazalina chrysolopha* observed nearby light sources on window glass and walls. © Ashant Dewan.

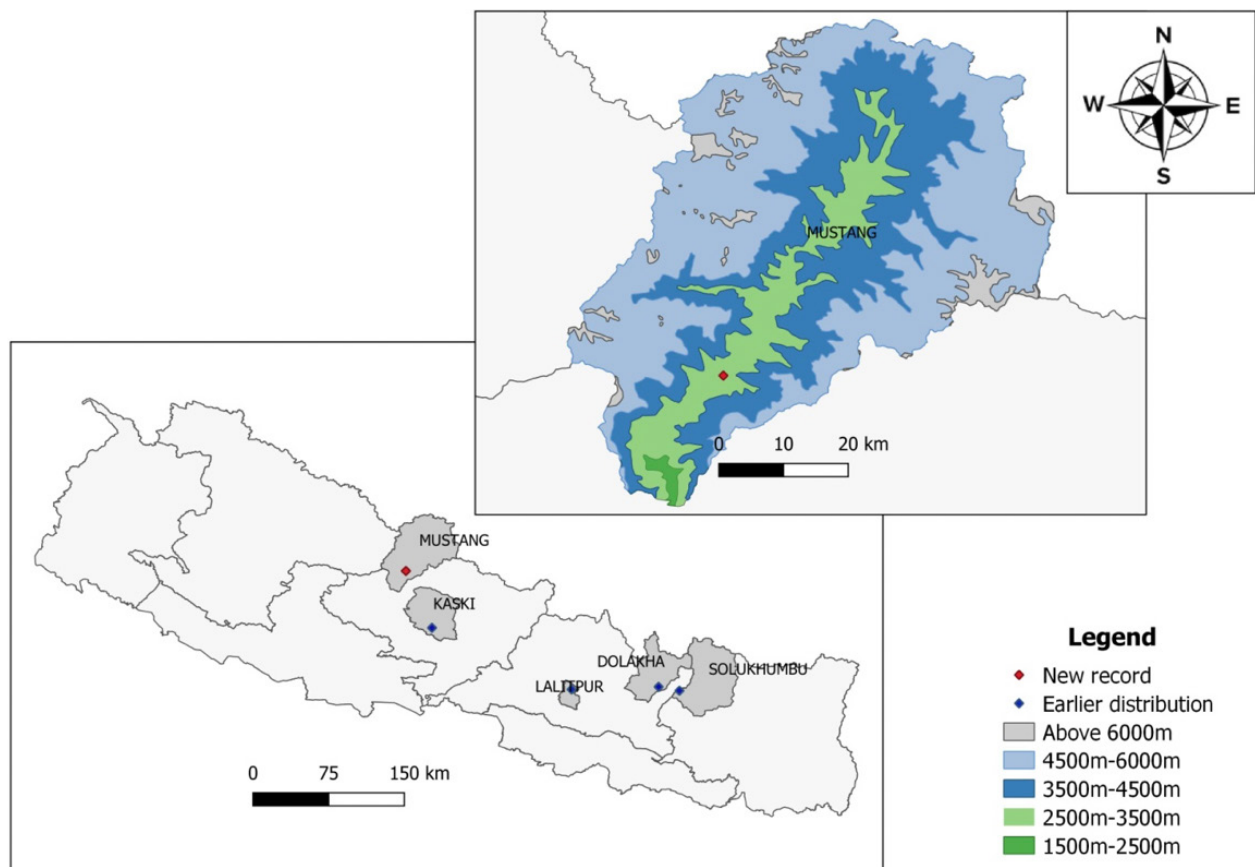


Image 3. Distribution record of *Gazalina chrysolopha* in Nepal. A red square indicates a new record in the Trans-Himalayan region of Mustang, western Nepal.

1892), whereas the females of these moths have a golden brown tuft of spines on their abdomen (Clements 1951; Manandhar et al. 2018).

The landscape was typical trans-Himalayan terrain with dry stony and sandy habitat scattered with grassy clumps, pine shrubs, and few cultivated land with apple trees. The finding of a moth in this region set forth the change in current distribution range, host, and habitat preference behaviors. Extending of study site with proper field equipment (light traps) could result in a complete inventory and distribution of overall moth species. Besides this, the possibility of an outbreak of SHAPU diseases cannot be denied. Timely awareness program is required in the area to prevent the spread of disease.

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ISSN 0974-7907 (Online) | ISSN 0974-7893 (Print)

August 2022 | Vol. 14 | No. 8 | Pages: 21487–21750

Date of Publication: 26 August 2022 (Online & Print)

DOI: 10.11609/jott.2022.14.8.21487-21750

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