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continued on the back inside cover

Cover: Nilgiri Large Burrowing Spider *Haploclostus nilgirinus*. Acrylic on canvas. © Aakanksha Komanduri.



First report of *Jauravia assamensis* Kapur, 1961 (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae) from West Bengal, India

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Abstract: The genus *Jauravia* Motschulsky, 1858 (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae) is distributed in India and nearby countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Nepal. The species, *Jauravia assamensis* Kapur, 1961 is reported from Assam, Manipur, and Maharashtra. In the present study, we are reporting this species for the first time from West Bengal.

Keywords: Coccinellinae, Darjeeling, description, distribution, Kalimpong, new record, ladybird beetle, predator, Sticholotidini, taxonomy.

A well-known and significant major group, ladybird beetles (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae) are sometimes referred to as ladybirds or lady beetles. The vivid colours of ladybirds, which are often red, orange, and black, greatly contribute to their appeal. Their wide appeal is manifested in the commercial and charitable organisations that use them as a motif. Coccinellidae is a speciose family of beetles with a worldwide distribution, currently including about 6,000 species classified in 370 genera (Ślipiński 2007). The Indian subcontinent is enriched with ladybird diversity, which houses more than 400 extant species belonging to 79 genera and 22 tribes (Poorani 2002). The coccinellid fauna of India is widespread and diversified. The composition of predatory coccinellids varies widely among various crop ecosystems. The vast variation in climate and vegetation

at various altitudes and large land area are the key factors responsible for such an expanded biodiversity of coccinellids in West Bengal. West Bengal has a tropical climate. Based on soil characterisation, rainfall, temperature, and terrain, six main agro-climatic zones (hill zone, terai zone, old alluvial zone, new alluvial zone, red & laterite zone, and coastal & saline zone) have been identified in West Bengal. Looking at the unbounded alteration in climate at diverse elevations, there is very little work on taxonomy as well as biodiversity of coccinellids in West Bengal.

The genus *Jauravia* was erected by Motschulsky (1858) with two species *Jauravia pallidula* and *Jauravia limbata*. Kapur (1946) conducted and published a taxonomic revision of this genus with 11 species. According to Poorani (2002) 15 species of this genus are known from the Indian sub-continent. Earlier *Jauravia assamensis* Kapur was reported from Assam (Kapur 1961), Manipur (Chakrabarti et al. 2012), Maharashtra (Patil & Gaikwad 2023), and Sundarbazar (Sajan et al. 2018) from Nepal. The present study documents the existence of *J. assamensis* for the first time from West Bengal, India along with its illustration of diagnostic characteristics and short notes.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area: A single specimen was collected from Kalimpong district of West Bengal, India by the first author. The geocoordinate of the sampling place was 27.263–27.375 °N & 88.650–89.477 °E (Image 1).

Insect sampling method: The ladybird specimen was collected by a ‘sweep sampling method’, as suggested by Gadagkar et al. (1990). The collected ladybird beetle was brought to the laboratory for identification.

Preservation and identification of specimens

Immediately after field collection, the insect was put into killing jars. The specimen was euthanized with the fumes of ethyl acetate present in the killing jar. The killed insect was put in the glass vial, labelled properly, and brought to the laboratory. Later, the beetle was stretched and glued to the triangular card point. The beetle specimen was meticulously examined under a stereoscopic trinocular microscope OPTIKA SZM-T, fitted with camera for studying its morphological characters. Photographs of the habitus and different body parts were taken by using Samsung S22 Ultra smartphone. Later the images were edited in Adobe Photoshop 2020 and arranged in CorelDRAW 2018. Measurement was taken by ocular micrometer fitted in the eyepiece of microscope. Drawings were done by smart pen with the software PENUP of Samsung S22 Ultra smartphone.

For dissection, the methodology described by Majerus & Kearns (1989) was used. Terminology used for adult morphology largely follows Ślipiński (2007).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A single notable individual of the ladybird species was encountered near the Bindu Village, Kalimpong (Image 1 & 2). The specimen was collected from a banyan tree. The species was confirmed as *J. assamensis* which is a first confirmed record for West Bengal, India.

Species account

Family: Coccinellidae Laterile, 1807

Subfamily: Coccinellinae Laterile, 1807

Tribe: Sticholotidini Weise, 1901

Genus *Jauravia* Motschulsky, 1858

Jauravia assamensis Kapur, 1961

Material examined

West Bengal, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Bindu Village, 27.263–27.375 °N & 88.650–89.477 °E, 600m, 14.xi.2022, coll. Tamoghno Majumder, 1 female, Banyan tree.

Description

Body length 1.960 mm and body width 1.862 mm. Form almost semi-rounded, dorsal side of the body mostly convex, and with sparse greyish pubescence

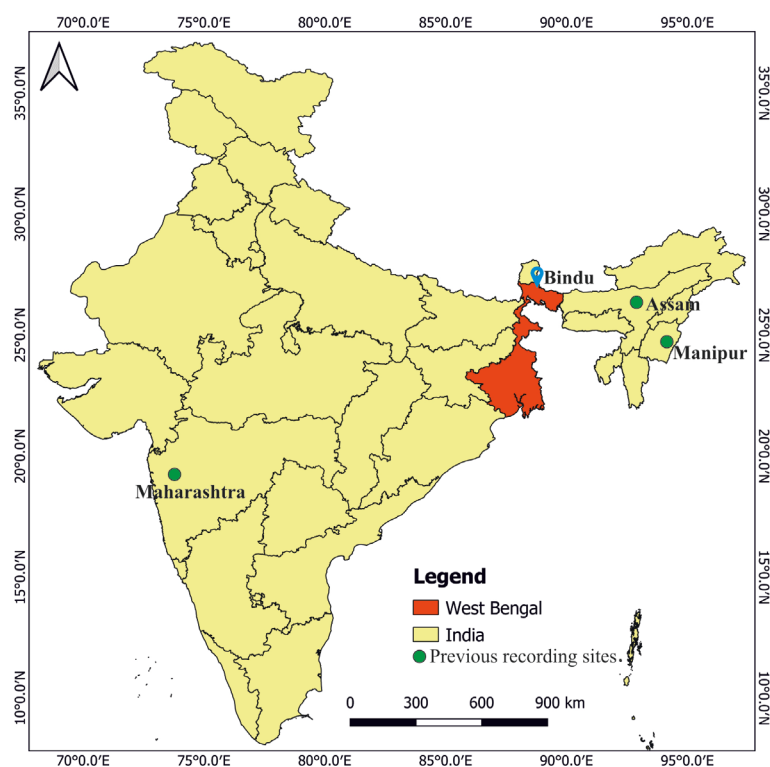


Image 1. Map showing location of the ladybird beetle observation place (Bindu, Kalimpong) West Bengal



Image 2. Diagnostic characters of *Jauravia assamensis* Kapur: 1 & 2—adult (dorsal view) | 3—elytra (dorsal aspect) | 4—elytra (ventral aspect) | 5—antennae | 6—prosternal carinae | 7–10—mouthparts: 7—labium | 8—maxilla | 9—labrum | 10—mandible | 11—abdomen (ventrite 1 & 2).

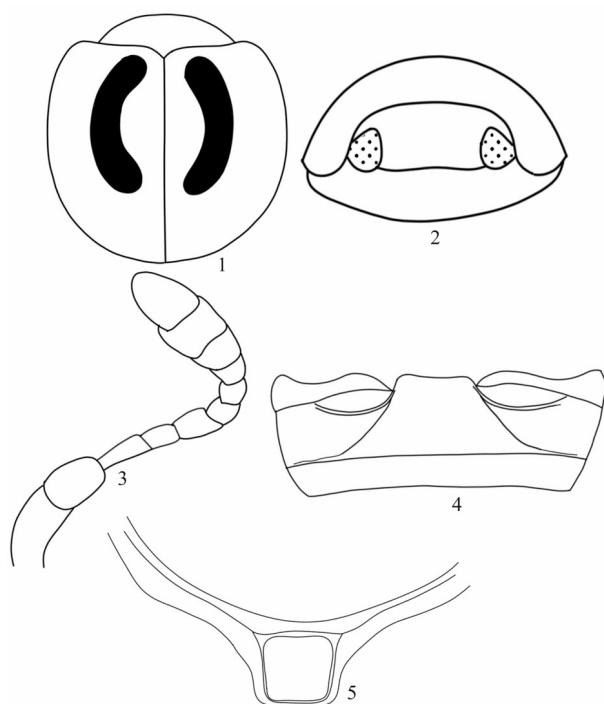


Figure 1. Line drawing of *Jauravia assamensis* Kapur: 1—adult (dorsal view) | 2—adult (frontal view) | 3—antennae | 4—abdomen (postcoxal line) | 5—prosternal carinae.

(Images 1(1,2); Figure 1(1)). Head and pronotum orange in colour with lightly distributed punctures (Image 2(2)). Prosternal carinae present, straight and slightly diverging anteriorly (Images 2(6); Figure 1(5)). Elytra orange in colour with distinguishable kidney-shaped black markings (Image 2(1,2,3)). Markings are rounded at both ends and its outer arc extends parallel to the elytral epipleuron (Images 2(2); Figure 1(1)). Elytral epipleuron is moderately broader (Image 2(4)). Scutellum very small. Antennae composed of 11 antennomeres, terminal antennomere narrowed apically (Images 2(5); Figure 1(3)). Mouthparts (Labium, maxilla, labrum, mandible) as illustrated (Image 2(7–10)). Eyes approximately oval, moderately small, widely separated, interocular distance about 3x as wide as an eye (Figure 1(2)). Ventral side of the body light orange in colour. Abdominal postcoxal line incomplete, reaching posterior margin of abdominal ventrite 1 and running along posterior margin, then almost touching lateral margin (Images 2(11); Figure 1(4)).

It is recorded from Assam, Manipur, and Maharashtra. Kapur (1961) specified *J. assamensis* is closely related to *Jauravia quadrinotata* Kapur in general appearance,

but is easily distinguished from it by the following characters: (i) *J. assamensis* is slightly smaller in size than *J. quadrinotata*; (ii) pattern of the black elytral markings in the two species is quite distinct; in *J. quadrinotata* there are two rounded spots on each elytron while in *J. assamensis* there is a well-defined, elongate, kidney-shaped elytral marking which does not show any tendency to break up into spots; and (iii) punctuation on the elytra is coarser and sparser in *J. quadrinotata* than *J. assamensis*. The holotype of *J. assamensis* was recorded as feeding on aphids from Assam (Kapur 1961). This species was observed to be preyed upon *Aphis gossypii* (Glover 1877) and *Myzus persicae* (Sulzer, 1776) from Manipur (Chakrabarti et al. 2012). Detailed descriptions and illustrations of the habitus, genitalia, and the immature stages of *J. assamensis* were provided by earlier researchers (Kapur 1961; Patil & Gaikwad 2023). The present study unveiled a current new habitat, range extension, and new diagnostic characteristics like the antenna and abdominal post-coxal line of this species, which were not illustrated by earlier researchers.

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Articles

Biodiversity in Garh Panchkot and surroundings (Purulia, West Bengal) of residential and migratory land vertebrates with special reference to endangered species

– Amrita Panja, Biplab Kahar & Sujoy Chattaraj, Pp. 26763–26779

Evaluating wildlife activity and corridor functionality: a study of underpasses in and around Rajaji National Park, India

– Nishant Verma, Saket Badola & Samrat Mondol, Pp. 26780–26788

Avifaunal diversity and conservation status of waterbirds in Pillaimadam Lagoon, Palk Bay, India

– H. Byju, H. Maitreyi, N. Raveendran, S. Ravichandran & Reshmi Vijayan, Pp. 26789–26802

Comments on the systematics and morphology of *Smithophis bicolor* (Blyth, 1855) (Reptilia: Squamata: Natricidae) based on topotypical specimens from Meghalaya, India

– Jayaditya Purkayastha, Bipin Meetei Asem, Hmar Tlawmte Lalremsanga, Madhurima Das, Holiness Warjri, Goldenstar Thongni & Sanath Chandra Bohra, Pp. 26803–26813

Diversity and distribution of fish in rivers Chinnar and Thenar and their tributary, southern Western Ghats, Tamil Nadu, India

– K. Mahesh Kumar, T. Ajayla Karthika & K. Anvar, Pp. 26814–26823

Diversity and habitat preferences of butterflies (Insecta: Lepidoptera) in Dzongu, Mangan, Sikkim, India

– Sonam Wangchuk Lepcha & Monish Kumar Thapa, Pp. 26824–26849

Seasonal study on succession of forensically significant entomofauna under indoor environment in Punjab, India

– Pawandeep Kaur & Madhu Bala, Pp. 26850–26856

Communications

First photographic record of ferret badger *Melogale* sp. (Mammalia: Carnivora: Mustelidae) from the state of Tripura, India

– Omkar Patil, Ashutosh Joshi & Amey Parkar, Pp. 26857–26863

An update on the status of some Data Deficient bat species from India

– Uttam Saikia, Manuel Ruedi & Rohit Chakravarty, Pp. 26864–26871

Distribution, perception, and conservation challenges of endemic Madras Hedgehog *Paraechinus nudiventris* in Tenkasi District, Tamil Nadu: insights from questionnaire surveys

– Brawin Kumar & Abinash Muthaiyan, Pp. 26872–26878

Notes on the interesting species *Tacca leontopetaloides* (L.) Kuntze

– Sk. Md. Abu Imam Saadi, Mehebab Sarwar Hossain, Debasis Bhunia, Sk. Rasidul Islam, Sayantan Tripathi, Sanjit Sinha & Amal Kumar Mondal, Pp. 26879–26886

Extended distribution of the rare basidiolichen *Sulzbacheromyces yunnanensis* (Lichenized Basidiomycota) from Mizoram, India

– V.L. Thachunglura, Prabhat Kumar Rai, Zohmangaiha Chawngthu, Lallawmkima Bochung, P.C. Vanlalhluna & John Zothanzama, Pp. 26887–26892

Short Communications

First photographic record of a Leopard Cat *Prionailurus bengalensis* (Kerr, 1792) (Mammalia: Carnivora: Felidae) in central India

– Prabhu Nath Shukla, Bilal Habib, Virendra Kumar Mishra, Sumedh Lomesh Bobade, Eshaan Chaitanya Rao & Kanishka, Pp. 26893–26897

New record of Mysore Slender Loris *Loris lydekkerianus* near Puducherry, India

– Shanmugam Mani, P. Aravind Aathi, K. Sivakumar, Aurosyll Bystrom & D. Saravanan, Pp. 26898–26902

The brachypterous endemic genus *Ardistomopsis* (Coleoptera: Carabidae: Panagaeinae) of the Indian subcontinent: first report of *Ardistomopsis batesi* Straneo & Ball, 1989 and *Ardistomopsis marginicollis* (Schaum, 1864) (Coleoptera: Carabidae: Panagaeinae) from the Western Ghats and the biogeographical significance

– V.A. Jithmon, M. Divya & Thomas K. Sabu, Pp. 26903–26907

First report of *Jauravia assamensis* Kapur, 1961 (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae) from West Bengal, India

– Tamoghno Majumder, Aloy Adak & Kusal Roy, Pp. 26908–26911

First record of *Hycleus marcipoli* Pan & Bologna, 2014 (Coleoptera: Meloidae) as a pest of Common Beans in Kashmir Himalaya, India

– Farhana Shafi & Altaf Hussain Mir, Pp. 26912–26916

***Sonerila bababudangiriensis* (Melastomataceae), a new species of herb from the Western Ghats of India**

– Prashant Karadakatti & Siddappa B. Kakkalameli, Pp. 26917–26922

Rediscovery of *Phallus aurantiacus* Mont. from India and new distribution record from Odisha, India

– Malay Prithwiraj Sahoo, Supriya Sahu, Samarendra Narayan Mallick, Prabhat Kumar Das, Yasaswinee Rout, Subrat Dalabehera, Sitaram Prasad Panda & Vinaykumar Hallur, Pp. 26923–26927

Occurrence of a rare desmid *Tetmemorus laevis* Ralfs ex Ralfs from Yumthang Valley, northern Sikkim with a note on the genus in India

– Debjyoti Das, Jay Mal & Jai Prakash Keshri, Pp. 26928–26931

Notes

***Ophiorrhiza japonica* Blume (Rubiaceae): a new record for India**

– Ngasheppam Malemnganbi Chanu, Peimichon Langkan, Thongam Nourenpai Khanganba & Thongam Biseshwori, Pp. 26932–26935

***Isodon neorensis* Ranjan, G. Krishna & Anant Kumar (Lamiaceae): a new record for Sikkim Himalaya, India**

– Pramod Rai, Pp. 26936–26938

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