

ORTHOPTERA (INSECTA) FROM PONG DAM WETLAND, DISTRICT KANGRA, HIMACHAL PRADESH, INDIA

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The number of known species of Orthoptera from the whole world is about 20,000 and out of these 1,750 species (Tandon & Hazra, 1998) -- nearly 10% -- are known from India. They are economically important insects, as some species cause considerable damage to crops, vegetables and forest plantations. The well known locusts belong to this group. Majority of the species are tropical and well represented in temperate and are found from sea level to high altitudes in the Himalaya.

Pong Dam Wetland is one of the largest man made wet lands of northern India, across the river Beas situated at the base of Dhauladhar ranges in Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh. The dam was completed in 1976, primarily for power generation, irrigation and control of floods. The length of the reservoir is 41km and its maximum width is 19km. It has a catchment area of 15,660km². An area of 423acres has been designated as Pong Dam Sanctuary. It is located between 31° 80' to 32° 07'26"N latitude and 75° 80' to 76° 25'E longitude. Pong Dam was declared a sanctuary in 1983. In the year 1994, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, declared it as a wetland of national importance. The Pong reservoir drains several streams and streamlets on its course from Dehra to Guglara. Five major streams like Ava, Mone, Gaj, Baner and Dehar emanate from the Dhauladhar ranges in Kangra Valley.

The catchment area is dominated by dry deciduous scrubs, Himalayan subtropical pine forest, Khair plantations etc. The area holds some important subtropical fauna and flora. The dominant flora of this area includes Acacia, Jamun, Shisham, Mango, Mulberry, Ficus, Kachnar, Amla and Prunus. Apart from these tree species a variety of shrubs, grasses and climbers are found.

Besides, a large area of the wetland is under agriculture where crops like wheat, *Brassica* are grown. A number of grass species cover the area which support reasonably good orthopteran insects.

There is no consolidated and authentic records available on orthopteran diversity of this wetland area. Keeping this in view a number of surveys were made from January 2000 to December 2001. The present paper depicts altogether, 39 species belonging to 35 genera, under eight families, belonging to super families Acridoidea (Short-horned Grasshoppers), Tetrigoidea (Grouse-Locusts), Tettigonioida (Long-horned Grasshoppers), and Grylloidea (Crickets).

Orthopteran (Insecta) diversity of Pong Dam Wetland and Catchment area, District Kangra, Himachal Pradesh is listed below.

Systematic list

Family Acrididae

Subfamily Acridinae

Acrida exaltata (Walker)

Phlaeoba infumata Brunner

Subfamily Oedipodinae

Heteropternis respondes

Aiolopus thalassinus tamulus (Fabricius)

Trilophidia annulata (Thunberg)

Oedaleus abruptus (Thunberg)

Sphingonotus longipennis Saussure

Gastrimargus a. africanus (Saussure)

Pusana laevis (Uvarov)

Acrotylus humbertianus Saussure

Subfamily Hemiacridinae

Spathosternum p. prasiniferum (Walker)

Subfamily Oxyinae

Oxya h. hyla Serville

Oxya fuscovittata (Marschall)

Subfamily Gomphocerinae

Dnopherula (Aulacobothrus) socius (Bolivar)

Dnopherula (Aulacobothrus) sp.

Subfamily Coptacridinae

Eucoptacra saturata (Walker)

Subfamily Cyrtacanthacridinae

Pachyacris vinosa (Walker)

Family Pyrgomorphidae

Aularches miliaris (Linnaeus)

Atractomorpha crenulata (Fabricius)

Chrotogonus (C.) t. trachypterus (Blanchard)

Poikilocerus pictus (Fabricius)

Pyrgomorpha sp.

Family Tetrigidae*Hedotettix attenuatus* Hancock*Hedotettix gracilis* (De Hann)*Ergatettix dorsiferus* (Walker)**Family Gryllotalpidae***Gryllotalpa africana* Beauvois**Family Gryllidae***Teleogryllus testaceus* (Walker)*Teleogryllus occipitalis* (Serville)*Plebeogryllus guttiventris* (Walker)*Loxoblemmus detectus* (Serville)*Pteronemobius fascipes* (Walker)*Gryllus bimaculatus* De Geer*Modicogryllus confirmatus* (Walker)**Family Phalangopsidae***Homoeogryllus cincticornis* (Walker)**Family Trigonidiidae***Trigonidium cicindeloides* Rambur**Family Tettigoniidae***Mecapoda elongata* (Linn.)*Ducetia japonica* (Thunberg)*Holochlora indica* Kirby*Letana megastridula* Ingrisch**Acknowledgement**

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CASSIA FISTULA LINNAEUS: A NEW LARVAL FOOD PLANT OF THE COMMON SAILER BUTTERFLY, NEPTIS HYLAS (MOORE) (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE)

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During May 2002, while collecting some Common Emigrant (*Catopsilia pomona* (Fabricius)) larvae from *Cassia fistula* near the Government College Campus, Madappally, Kozhikode District, Kerala, I saw two Nymphalid eggs on the leaf tips of that plant, one of which I collected and kept for hatching while the other I left on the leaf. Later a brown coloured larva emerged from these eggs, both in the field and in the laboratory. Upon maturity, it emerged as the Common Sailer *Neptis hylas* (Moore) (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae).

Common Sailer larva reportedly feeds on *Cylista* sp., *Lathyrus* sp., *Mucuna purpurea*, *Xylia xylocarpa*, *Canavalia gladiata*, *Vigna cylindrica*, *Vigna unguiculata*, *Paracalyx scariosa* (Fabaceae), *Ceiba pentandra*, *Bombax ceiba* (Bombacaceae), *Triumfetta rhomboidea*, *Corchorus capsularis*, *Corchorus olitorius*, *Grewia tiliaefolia* (Tiliaceae), *Nothapodytes nimmoniana* (Icacinaeae), *Helicteres isora* (Sterculiaceae) and *Flemingia macrophylla* (Acanthaceae) (Wynter-Blyth, 1957; Kunte, 2000).

Cassia fistula (Caesalpiniaceae) was not recorded so far as a food plant of the Common Sailer larva. The occurrence and successful rearing of Common Sailer on *Cassia fistula* confirms it as a new larval food plant.

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