

SCIENTIFIS NOTES

REDISCOVERY AND DISTRIBUTION OF *ORETA VATAMA LUCULENTA* WATSON, 1967 (LEPIDOPTERA: DREPANIDAE) FROM THE PIR PANJAL VALLEY, NORTH-WESTERN HIMALAYAS, KASHMIR, INDIA

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Drepanidae is a family of moths that come under the superfamily Drepanoidea of the order Lepidoptera which comprises hooktip moths. Many species of the family Drepanidae have a uniquely hook-shaped apex to the forewing, which often acquires them with a common name of hooktip moths. Presently, superfamily Drepanoidea covers three families viz. Cimeliidae, Doidae, and Drepanidae with an estimate of more than 672 species across the globe (Nieukerken et al., 2011). The Indian moth fauna is represented by only one family Drepanidae from the superfamily Drepanoidea. Hampson (1892) made a first attempt to compile the Indian Drepanidae as (Drepanulidae) with an addition of 66 species from British India. At present, a total number of 164 valid species (together with subspecies) under 55 genera from the superfamily Drepanoidea with four subfamilies of Drepanidae viz. Cyclidiinae, Drepaninae, Oretinae, and Thyatirinae are distributed across India (Joshi et al., 2020). Species from the family Drepanidae has been reported by their characteristic morphological and genital characters such as, sternum A2 with tergum A1 connecting tergo-sternal sclerites which develop characteristic tympanal organs; frenulum is often apically clubbed when present; reduction of branches of the radial system can be seen in forewing venation, usually with a narrow areole within it; both male and female genitalia show variety of structure, signum or signa can be often seen in female genitalia; aedeagus vesica rarely has cornuti; tegumen usually with socii (Holloway, 1998).

The subspecies, *Oreta vatama luculenta* was first scientifically described by Watson in 1967 from the Liddar Valley of Gulmarg, Kashmir, India. From the time of its first description by Watson in 1967, no such distribution or collection of the species was reported from any part of Kashmir, India. The present study communicates the first comprehensive report and rediscovery of the *O. vatama luculenta* (Watson, 1967) reported from the Pir Panjal Valley of the Kashmir, J&K, UT, India after 55 years with coloured and mounted evidence of the species. The species was collected near Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary, District Shopian, Kashmir (Fig. 1) at an altitude of 2546 m with coordinates (33°41'N 74°43'E) during the night hours on 20.09.2021.

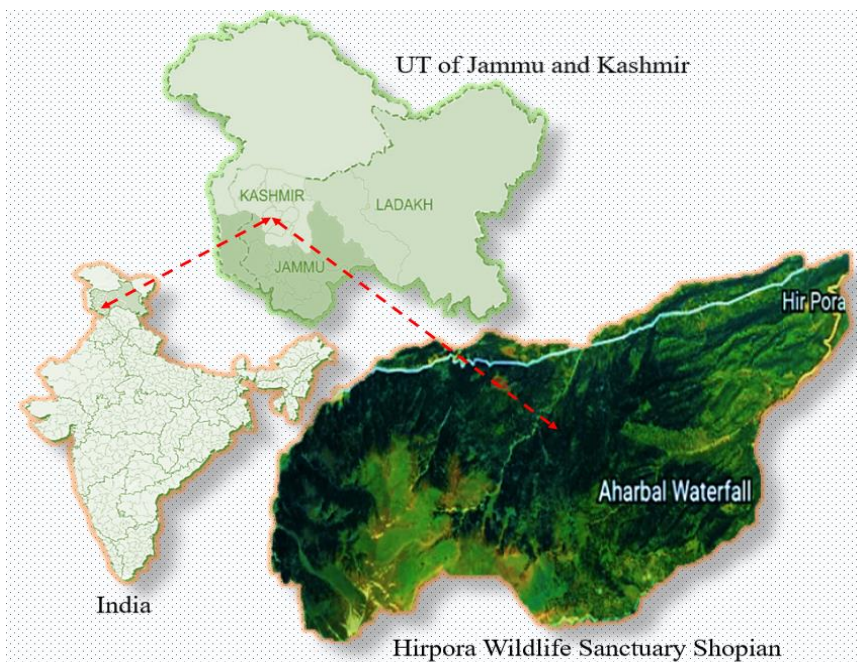


Figure 1. Map of the location where the species was collected (Designed by Muzafar Riyaz).

SPECIES ACCOUNT

Order: Lepidoptera
Superfamily: Drepanoidea
Family: Drepanidae
Subfamily: Drepaninae
Genus: *Oreta* Walker, 1855

Species: *O. vatama* Moore, 1866

Subspecies: *O. vatama luculenta* Watson, 1967

O. vatama luculenta Watson 1967, Bull. Br. Mus. Nat. Hist. (Ent), 19 (3): 189.

Type-species: *O. hyalodisca* Hampson, 1896.

Distribution. India: NW. India (Dalhousie, Shimla), Kashmir, (Liddar valley, Gulmarg) (Watson, 1967). **Global:** Pakistan (Watson, 1967).

Species description. Wingspan: ♂ 21-24 mm. Yellow and Red Brown; *Oreta vatama luculenta* is separable from the nominate subspecies, which occurs in N.E. India, by the more strongly convex outer margin and more strongly falcate apex of the male forewing (Fig. 2). It can be distinguished from each of the other three subspecies by the very weakly marked outer marginal band on the forewing and by the male genitalia. The apex is broader and truncate in *O. vatama* but blunt and slightly tapering in *O. vatama luculenta*.

North-western Himalayas especially the Kashmir region is one of the major biodiversity hotspots of India. The region is rich in both flora and fauna and the

revision of the moth fauna in the region has not been well documented in the recent past besides some old checklists from British India and authors of the different parts of India as well. With these short notes and mini-revisions of the insect species, many young researchers will come forward to explore more unexplored areas of the Kashmir Himalayas as new many species await discovery (Riyaz & Reshi, 2021).



Figure 2. A mounted specimen of male *O. vatama luculenta* (Mounted by Muzafar Riyaz).

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