

SIGHTING OF BRANDED YEOMAN *ALGIA FASCIATA FASCIATA* (FELDER & FELDER, 1860) (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE: HELICONIINAE) IN JAINTIA AND CACHAR HILLS, NORTHEASTERN INDIA

Rajkamal Goswami¹, Monsoon Jyoti Gogoi² & Seena N. Karimbumkara³

^{1,3} Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Royal Enclave, Srirampura, Jakkur Post, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560064, India
² Bokakhat East Dagaon, Golaghat District, Assam 785612, India
¹ rajkamal@atree.org (corresponding author), ² monsoonjyoti@gmail.com, ³ seena.narayanan@atree.org

The nymphalid butterfly *Algia fasciata fasciata* (Felder & Felder, 1860) has been known to occur from Myanmar (south of Karen Hills), Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Hainan, Malay Peninsula, Borneo, Sumatra, Nias, Java, Philippines and the Andaman Islands with different geographical races or subspecies (Inayoshi 2012). From both Myanmar and the Andamans, it was reported as ‘not rare’ by Evans (1932) whereas Corbet et al. (1992) reported the species to be very common in the Malay peninsula. The other two species of the genus *Algia* are *A. satyrina* (Felder & Felder, 1867) and *A. felderi* (Kirsch, 1877), the former being reported from Sulawesi and Bangka islands and the latter from Papua New Guinea

(http://ftp.funet.fi/index/Tree_of_life/insecta/lepidoptera/ditrysia/papilionoidea/nymphalidae/heliconiinae/algia/).

In this note, we report the species *Algia fasciata fasciata* from Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya and the adjacent Barail Hills of Assam (see Fig. 1), based on several individuals recorded consistently over a period of three years between November 2011 and July 2014. This is the only species of the genus *Algia* reported so far from the Indian subcontinent.

A detailed description of the species was provided by Evans (1932). The female of *A. fasciata fasciata* is slightly darker with broader wings than the male. Male upper fore wings are with a dull ochreous brand on either side of veins 5 and 6. Upperside is dark brown with a pale yellow discal band on the fore and hind wing and two outer rows of conjoined yellow spots; the discal band on upper fore wing ends at vein 4 and there is a yellow spot that spreads across veins 5 and 6. The wingspan of the species is 40–50 mm (Pinratana 2006). The larvae which feeds on *Hydnocarpus* (Achariaceae) and *Eugenia* (Myrtaceae) have not been found in India so far.

The first known record of this species from the Indian mainland was reported through an image posted for identification on Facebook (on 10 September 2011). The image was shot at Kaliabor, situated in the Nagaon



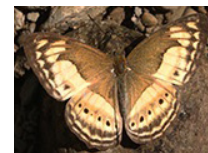
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Algia fasciata fasciata



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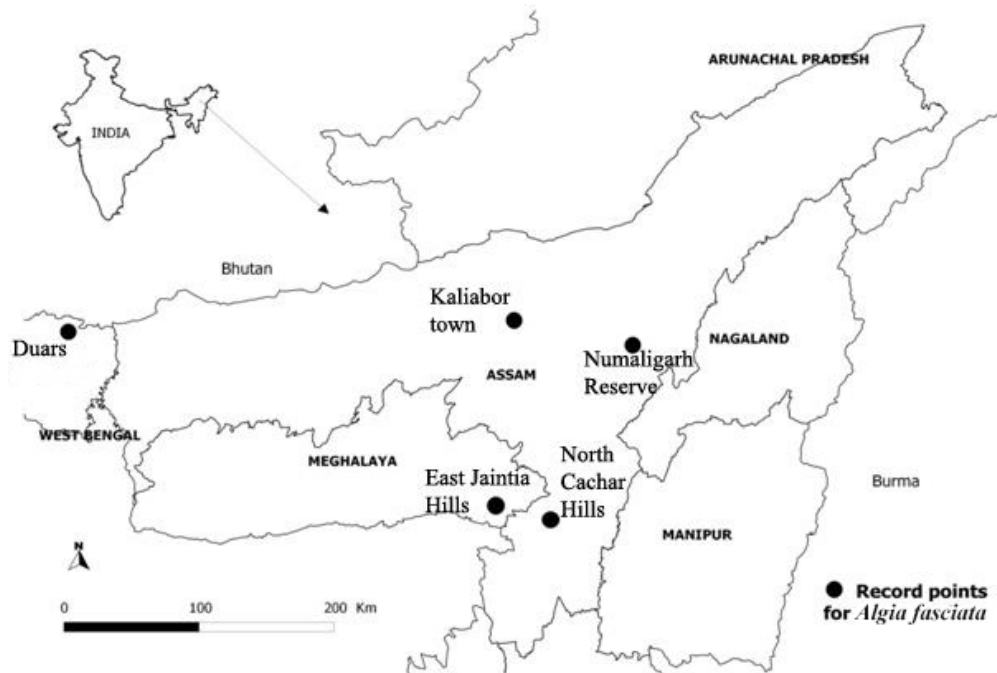


Figure 1. Map showing recent records of *Algia fasciata fasciata* in northeastern India

District of Assam on 13 April 2011 (Fig. 1) and has been reported in the local print media (<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov2711/at092>).

Monsoon Jyoti Gogoi (MJG) might have sighted the species in Numaligarh Reserve situated in the Golaghat District of Assam circa February 2008, but the record remains unconfirmed in the absence of a photographic record. Apart from the above sightings, the species has not been reported from the above two sites or any nearby locations till date.

The first record of *A. f. fasciata* from Narpuh area of eastern Jaintia Hills in Meghalaya came through three individuals recorded by Rajkamal Goswami (RG) on 24 November 2011 and three individuals from Malidor on 25 November 2011. RG and Seena N. Karimbunkara (SNK) further recorded two individuals in Sonapyrdi on 8 November 2012 and seven individuals on the same date in Malidor (Image 1 a,c,d,e). Subsequently, from Barail Hills, MJG reported *A. f. fasciata* through two individuals recorded in December 2012. MJG has also recorded several individuals of this species from three different locations at Barail Wildlife Sanctuary in 2013 and 2014, both during the month of December (Image 1 b,f). Apart from November and December, several individuals of this species has been recorded from the Narpuh area of East Jaintia Hills in July 2014 and August 2013 by MJG and RG respectively.

From Jaintia Hills, all the records of this species have been reported from approximately 50–300 m elevation. However, the elevation range of this species was much higher in Barail Hills, with records at 950m.

Both RG and MJG have been involved in multi-seasonal monitoring of the species in Jaintia Hills and Barail Hills and both these sites have been intensively monitored between 2011–2013. It has been observed that the flight period of *Algia fasciata* is between July and December in the Jaintia and Barail Hills. We are yet to record the species during the month of March–April, as was recorded by Mudai in 2011.

From Malayasia, *A. f. fasciata* has been observed until June. Therefore the restriction of our sightings of *A. f. fasciata* between July and December might mean that the butterfly is not breeding in the area and that the sighted individuals are vagrants from neighbouring Myanmar. Alternatively, their restricted appearance in Assam and Meghalaya might also be an indicator of the population's univoltine characteristic. According to our sightings, the species is locally common in the Narpuh area of East Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya and Barail Wildlife Sanctuary, Cachar, Assam.

From India, apart from the sites mentioned in Assam and Meghalaya, the species has also been reported from the Buxa Tiger Reserve (BTR), situated in the Duar region, northern part of West Bengal (S. Nandi pers. comm. 2012). Since then, however, the species has



Image 1. a,c,e - *Algia fasciata fasciata* male from Narpuh area of East Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya; b&f - *A. f. fasciata* female from Barail Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam; d - female from Malidor, Meghalaya

not been reported from BTR, where both amateurs and researchers are engaged in continuous butterfly documentation (Ayan Chakrabarty, pers. comm. 2014).

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