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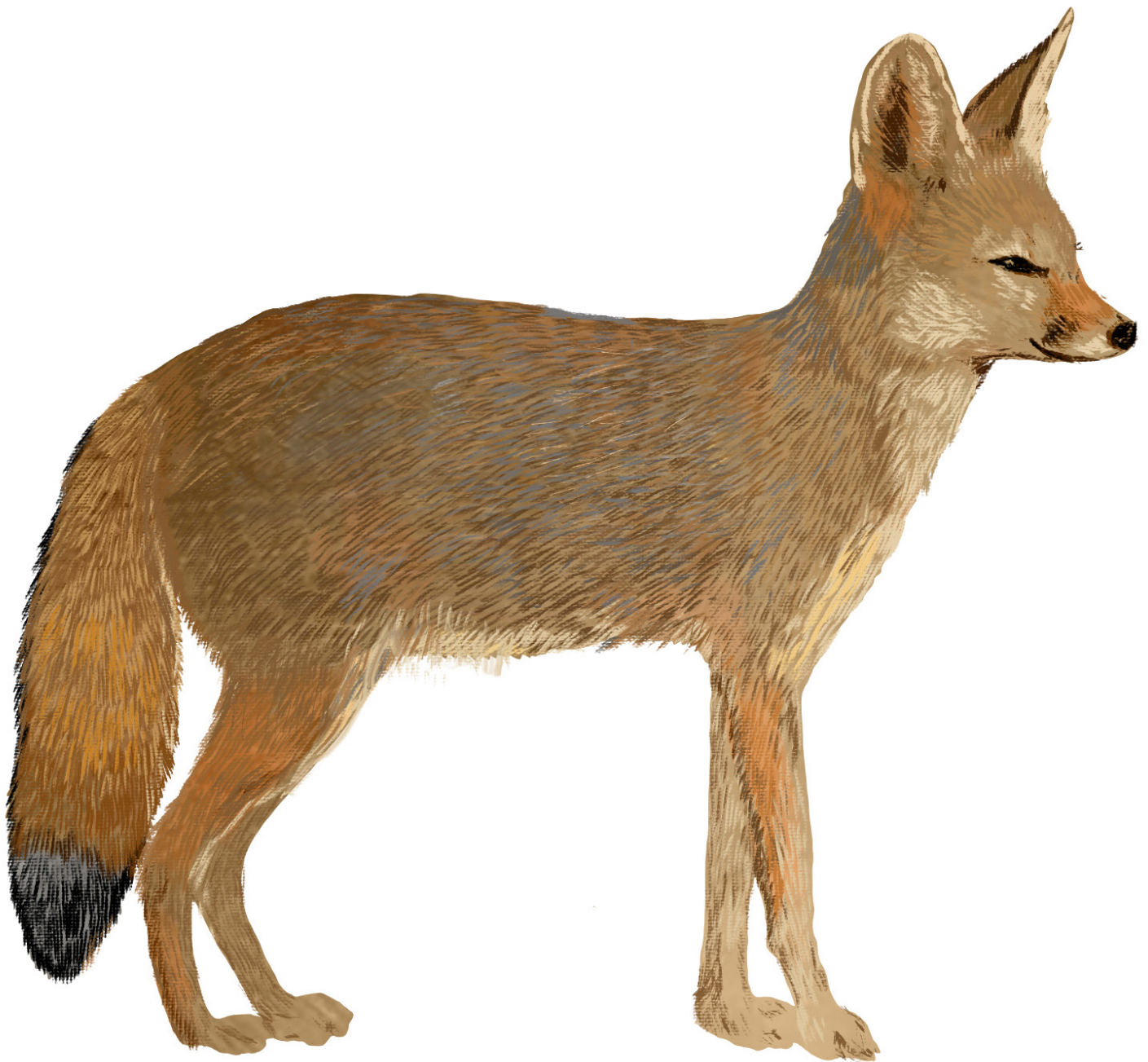
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Cover: Bengal Fox *Vulpes bengalensis*—digital illustration. © Alagu Raj.



Red Pierrot *Talicauda nyseus nyseus* (Guérin-Meneville, 1843): an addition to the butterfly fauna of Arunachal Pradesh, India

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The Red Pierrot *Talicauda nyseus nyseus* (Guérin-Meneville, 1843) is a butterfly belonging to the blue family Lycaenidae found in the Indian subcontinent. This butterfly is usually noticeable due to their striking patterns and colours. Both the wings are white, with black dots, and a huge section of the hindwings lower edge, which is orange (Bingham 1907). The genus *Talicauda* is a monotypic Oriental genus, and the genus is represented by *T. nyseus* (Guérin-Meneville, 1843) which comprised of nine recognized subspecies, including *T. n. nyseus* in southern India (Kunte 2000), Sri Lanka (Seitz 1924), *T. n. khasiana* in Khasia Hills (Evans 1925), *T. n. assamica* in Assam (Larsen 1987), *T. n. metana* in northern Thailand (Pinratana 1981), *T. n. annamitica* in Indo-China (D'Abrera 1986), *T. n. burmana* from Shan State of Myanmar to western Thailand (Evans 1925), *T. n. macbethi* in eastern Thailand (Riley 1932), *T. n. delhiensis* in northern India (Kumar et al. 2009), and *T. n. lami* from Hainan Island, China (Philip & Ding 2017). Singh (2005) indicated that due to climate change, the Red Pierrot butterfly has been expanding into the foothills of the Himalaya. As a result, it can now be found from

southern India (Kunte 2000) and Kerala (Skaria et al. 1997) to Dehradun (Singh 2005), Delhi (Smetacek 2009), Kumaon Himalaya (Smetacek 2011), Himachal Pradesh (Mahendroo & Smetacek 2011), Chhattisgarh (Singh et al. 2023), and Sikkim (Sharma et al. 2023).

The species is documented to utilize *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana* (Balakrishnan pers. obs. 2017), *K. calycinum* (Davidson et al. 1896; Bell 1918; Robinson et al. 2010), *K. laciniata* (Wynter-Blyth 1957; Kunte 2000), *Bryophyllum delagoense* (Balakrishnan pers. obs. 2017), and *B. pinnatum* (Crassulaceae) (Wynter-Blyth 1957; Kunte 2000) as its common host plants. A thorough examination of the literature did not yield any records of this species in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Nevertheless, our present survey results revealed the presence of this butterfly species in Arunachal Pradesh, India. A single individual of this species was observed on 12 February 2023, near the Himalayan University, Itanagar (27.04314N, 93.39154E), at an elevation of 201 m, and an additional individual was sighted during the monsoon season on 28 July 2023 in Basar, Leparada District (27.98352N, 94.68769E), at an elevation of 603

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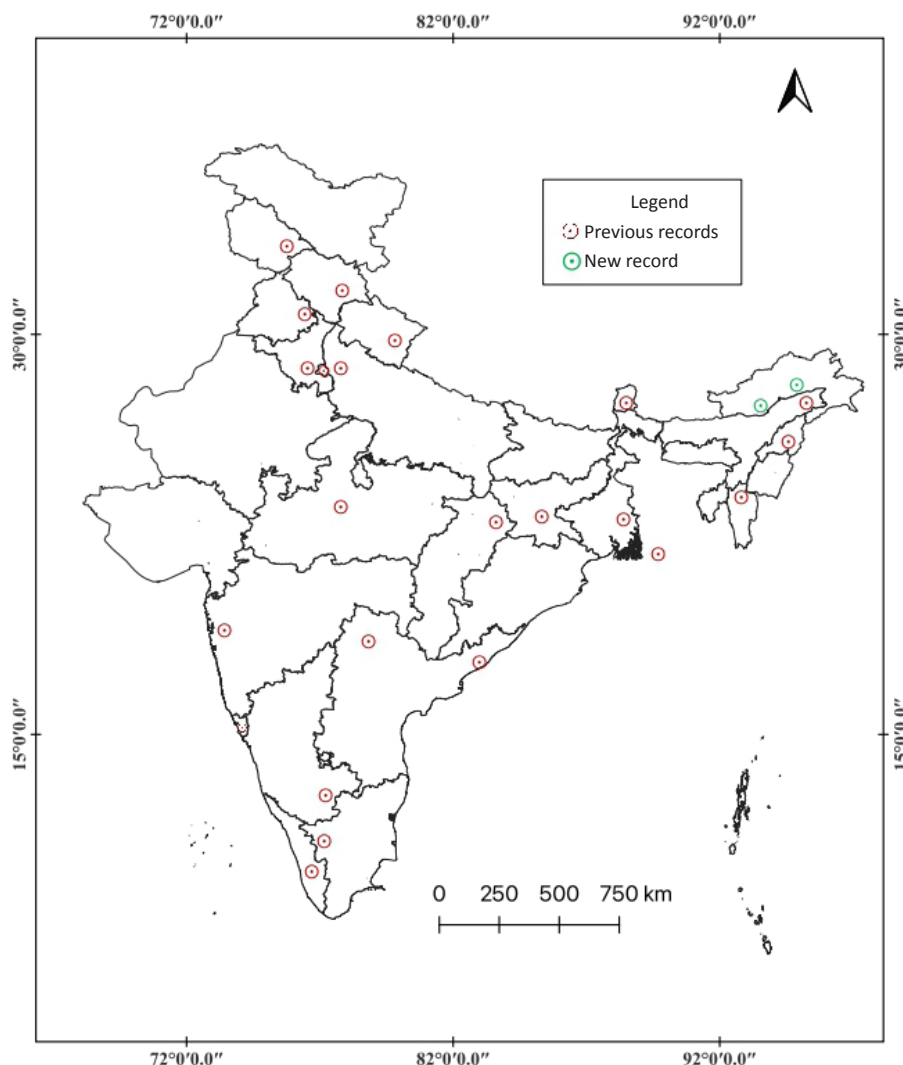


Figure 1. Record of *Talicauda nyseus nyseus* (Guérin-Meneville, 1843) from India.

m (Figure 1). However, the observations of both species took place in distinct habitats: one near Himalayan University, characterized by an abundance of herbaceous flora, observed nectaring on *Oxalis corniculata* flowers (Image 1), while the other encountered nectaring on *Mentha* sp. within a kitchen garden in Basar, Leparada (Image 2). Both species were photographed using a Nikon D5600 equipped with a 40 mm kit lens. Identification of the species was confirmed with the help of literature provided by Evans (1925), Wynter-Blyth (1957), and Kehimkar (2016).

Based on earlier observation, this species is observed at elevations up to 2,000 m on the outskirts of woodlands, showing a preference for semi-arid plains, evergreen, & semi evergreen forests, hill stations, and domestic garden (Kunte 2000; Smetacek 2011). Consequently, its presence in Arunachal Pradesh aligns with these habitat

preferences. Additionally, the presence of host plants *Kalanchoe* and *Bryophyllum* contributes to the species habitat suitability within the surrounding environment.

The current documentation showcases the first photographic evidence of *T. nyseus nyseus* from Arunachal Pradesh, presenting a new addition to the state butterfly fauna. It is crucial to conduct thorough scientific investigations to obtain further insights into this species, including its distinct host plant preferences, life cycle patterns throughout all seasons and its correlation with floral composition within its habitat, particularly during nectaring activities. As a result, such a report will help to update the distribution of the species in the state.



Image 1 & 2. 1—An adult *Talicauda nyseus nyseus*, observed nectaring on *Oxalis corniculata* flowers near Himalayan University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh on 12 February 2023 | 2—An adult *T. n. nyseus*, observed nectaring on *Mentha* sp. within a kitchen garden in Basar, Leparada, Arunachal Pradesh on 28 July 2023.

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