Field Guide to the Butterflies *of* Sri Lanka

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Fig. 1. The island of Sri Lanka, off the southeast coast of India

Fig. 2a (above). Topographic map. Color indicates elevation: 0–10 m asl=red; rising through green, yellow, tan to white (highest elevation); Fig. 2b (below). Transverse section. a: outer plains, b: mid-elevation hills, c: central highlands

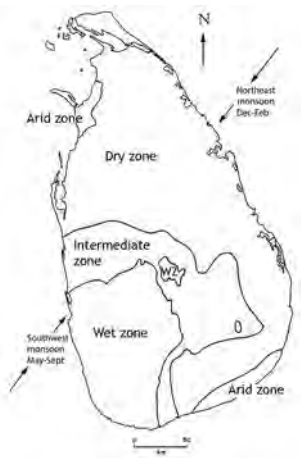


Fig. 3. Climatic zones of Sri. Lanka. Adapted from MFE (1999).

Sri Lanka and its butterflies

Sri Lanka, called Ceylon in days gone by, lies southeast of the southern tip of India, between 5 and 10 degrees north of the equator. Famed for its tea and its natural beauty, Sri Lanka presents a varied topography, climate and vegetation that provides a rich environment for butterflies. Despite its small size, the island boasts 248* species of butterflies of which about 31 species are endemic. The butterfly fauna of the island is similar to that of peninsular India, and many species are only slightly differentiated from those found there. Evidence suggests that most of the original butterfly fauna of the island and of India was destroyed by a cataclysmic series of volcanic eruptions and ice ages in the distant past. The species currently found in India and Sri Lanka appear to be of relatively recent origin, having arrived from the Oriental regions to the east, and from the Palearctic regions from the north and east and with a few species drawn in from Africa and West Asia. Nevertheless, at least two species, the Blue Glassy Tiger (*Ideopsis similis*) and the Great Crow (*Euploea phaenareta*), which are not found in India, may have been brought in accidentally in the 1800s through trade. Three species, the Yellow Palm Dart (*Cephrenes trichopepla*), the Banana Redeye (*Erionota torus*) and the Orange Migrant (*Catopsilia scylla*), are recent arrivals and were probably brought in inadvertently by the horticultural trade.

*Siva Sunbeam (*Curetis siva*) was confirmed in late 2017 as being resident in Sri Lanka

Climatic zones, habitats and butterflies

The four broadly defined climatic zones of the country — arid, dry, intermediate, and wet — are largely based on rainfall and elevation.

Wet zone. This region receives 1900 mm to over 5000 mm of rain annually depending on the location, and encompasses an area roughly equivalent to the southwest quadrant of the island, extending from sea level to the highest mountain peaks. It encompasses several ecosystems.

a) Lowland wet zone: The natural vegetation of the lowland wet zone, from sea level to 1000 m asl, is represented by several plant communities. The most prominent are the Tropical Lowland Wet Evergreen forests which are sometimes broadly categorized into the Dipterocarp forest community and the *Mesua-Shorea* community. The former is largely composed of species such as *Dipterocarpus hispidus*, *D. zeylanicus*, *Vateria copallifera*, *Vatica obscura*, *Semecarpus gardneri* and *Chaetocarpus castanocarpus* while the latter comprises species such as *Mesua ferrea*, *Shorea affinis*, *Anisophyllea cinnamomoides*, *Garcinia hermonii* and *Xylopia championi*. These forests receive 2500–5000 mm of rain annually depending on the location, have no dry period,

Getting the most out of this book

Field guides typically arrange species in taxonomic order. In this book, however, the species are arranged by grouping similar-looking ones together, with the families being organized alphabetically. Although some may find this arrangement unsatisfactory, it was done with the less-experienced person in mind, to whom this book is particularly useful, although there is considerable information of interest to the more experienced butterfly watcher as well.

The goal of this field guide is to present the jizz of each species — that collection of characteristics including color, size and behavior that help to identify a species in the field more accurately.

The accounts are written in telescopic style—shortened sentences—in order to present as much pertinent information as possible within the limited space (see "Shortened phrases" and "Shortened place names" below). Where the male and female are similar, only one image is usually given of the underside and upperside. For some species, the upperside has not been shown as it is rarely displayed in the field. For other species, males and females are listed on different pages as they are so different in appearance. For example, the female Black Prince is listed among the orange Nymphalids but the male among the dark brown Nymphalids.

Identification points given are those that are most helpful for use in the field. Some species may not have text describing their appearance simply because they are so strikingly different from all other species, e.g. the Gaudy Baron. Some species can be easily identified by examining the upperside, but a few among them seldom display the upperside in the field. Other species need to be examined in the hand for positive identification, whereas still others require the genitalia to be examined for confirmation. For complete details, refer to *The Butterfly Fauna of Sri Lanka* (van der Poorten & van der Poorten, 2016).

Common names: We have used only one common name for each species, and have adhered to the "old names". A few years ago a new list of common names was developed for Sri Lankan butterflies. One of the main features of this naming convention was the use of the phrase "Sri Lankan" for each endemic species. We have not used these new names for two reasons: first, it has resulted in some rather long, unwieldy names, e.g. Sri Lankan Singalese Hedge Blue (formerly Singalese Hedge Blue) for *Udara singalensis*; secondly, it is prone to name reversals. If the status of a currently identified endemic species changes to non-endemic because of new research findings, the prefix "Sri Lankan" must be dropped from the name, resulting in more changes.

Butterflies are classified in the Order Lepidoptera, which also includes moths. They are grouped into seven families, of which only six are found in Sri Lanka: Hesperiidae, Lycaenidae, Nymphalidae, Papilionidae, Pieridae, and Riodinidae.

Hesperiidae: the Skippers
- usually small and brown
- fly swiftly and close to the ground


Lycaenidae: the Blues
- usually small and blue
- fly quickly and close to the ground or high up in the canopy


Nymphalidae: the Brushfoots
- usually medium-sized and brightly colored
- fly quickly at mid-heights and higher up


Papilionidae: the Swallowtails
- usually large and brightly colored
- fly leisurely at mid- and high levels


Pieridae: the Whites and Yellows
- usually medium-sized
- fly quickly at mid-heights and close to the ground


Riodinidae: the Metalmarks
- usually medium-sized
- fly at mid-height
- only one species in Sri Lanka


Hesperiidae: the Skippers

Members of the Hesperiidae (Hesperiids) are small to medium-sized butterflies that are usually brown or black with orange or white markings. Their common name reflects their style of flight. They are widely distributed worldwide with over 4000 species, 50 of which have been recorded in Sri Lanka.

Adults are usually strong fliers with a fast, irregular, darting flight. Some species rest with their wings folded up above the body, whereas others rest with hindwings opened flat and forewings held vertical. Still others hold both wings spread horizontally. Some species feed on nectar whereas others feed only, or additionally, on tree-sap, bird-droppings, dung and rotting fruit. In many species, the males mudsip, usually on wet soil but some species mudsip on dry rock or dry ground by excreting a liquid from their abdomen onto the dry substrate and then sucking up the nutrients. Hesperiids are found in a variety of habitats from arid thorn scrub to wet forests.

Eggs are usually dome-shaped, colored white, pale yellow, brown or green, and are smooth or ribbed; some are covered with scales. Most larvae are covered with setae (hairs), and some species are brightly colored whereas others are green or brown. Larvae often construct a shelter using leaves of the larval food plant and silk from their silk glands. The pupae of many species have a horn on the head and a long proboscis sheath. In many species, the larva pupates within its larval shelter. The pupa is attached by the cremaster and sometimes by a silk girdle. The larvae feed on leaves.

The immature stages and larval food plants of all Hesperiids in Sri Lanka have been described except for those of the following: Ceylon Golden Angle (*Caprona alida*), Banded Redeye (*Gangara lebadea*), Decorated Ace (*Thoressa decorata*), Common Dart (*Potanthus pseudomaesa*), Large Branded Swift (*Pelopidas subochracea*) and Pallid Dart (*Potanthus pallida*).

Indian Awl King (*Choaspes benjaminii*) 50–60 mm (M1)

Underside shining greenish-blue; bright orange spot on hindwing with a few black spots. Uncommon; occurs in forested hills above 1500 m asl. Main flight season Jan–Apr; a few fly year-round. Flies strongly and moves about a great deal. Fond of nectar of flowers of various species of *Rubrus* and forest trees. Male frequently feeds on bird droppings. Female flies in the canopy in search of egg-laying sites. Often recorded from Hakgala, Nuwara Eliya and Bomuruella.

Brown Awl (*Badamia exclamationis*) 50–55 mm (M2)

Forewings noticeably narrow and extend well beyond abdomen when settled; abdomen striped pale yellow; no spots on underside. Found island-wide in forests and well-wooded areas, usually close to its larval food plants, *Hiptage benghalensis* and *Terminalia bellirica*. Uncommon; main flight season Jan–Apr; a few fly year-round in optimal habitats. Habitually settles on underside of a leaf after flying about rapidly. Feeds on nectar of forest blooms. See also page 44.

Orange-tailed Awl (*Bibasis sena*) 45–50 mm (M3)

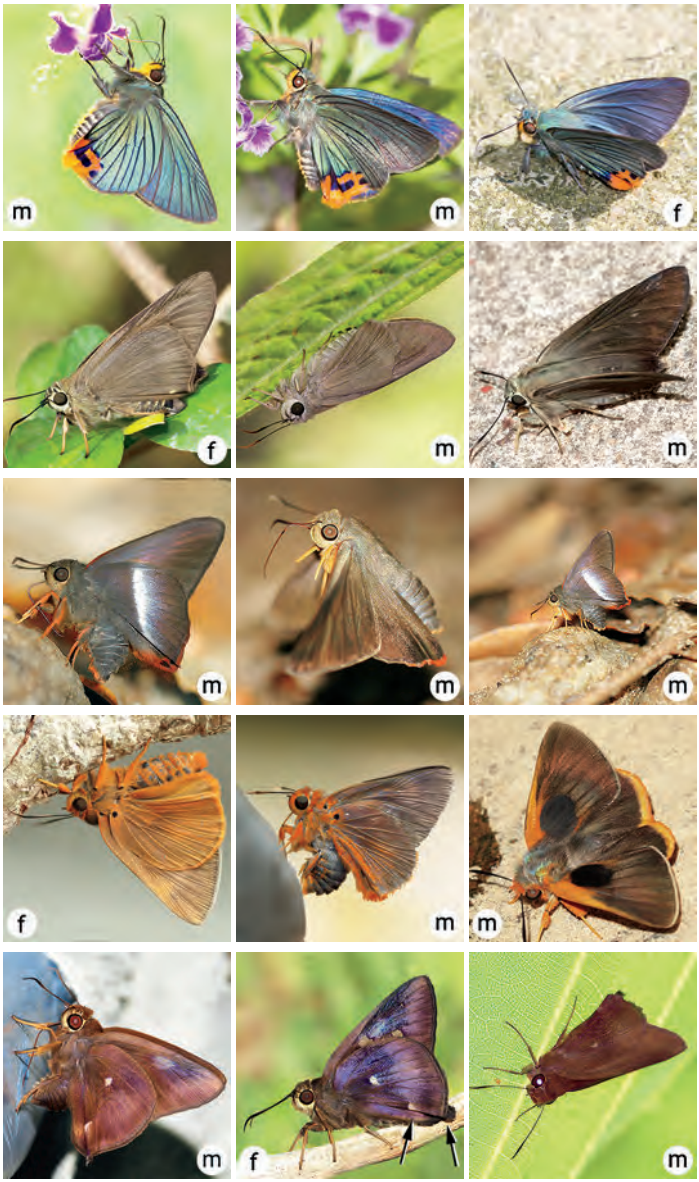
Underside with orange-colored tail and broad white band fading towards outer margin. Rare; seldom seen due to its crepuscular habit. Flies Jan–Apr; most common in central and Uva hills up to 1300 m asl in habitats that support good stands of its only known larval food plant, *Hiptage benghalensis*. Mudsips, sometimes by sucking up dew and expelling it onto dry ground. Feeds on nectar of forest blooms.

Branded Orange Awlet (*Burara oedipodea*) 40–50 mm (M4)

Underside orange-brown with a black spot at base of each wing; body covered with bright orange scales. Rare; seldom seen due to its crepuscular habit. Main flight season Jan–Apr; a few fly year-round. Behavior and distribution similar to those of Orange-tailed Awl but found at elevations as high as 1800 m asl. Often reported from Knuckles (Riverstone).

Ceylon Awl (*Hasora badra*) 35–45 mm (M5)

Underside hindwing with a white spot at center, prominent anal fold and a short tail. Rare denizen of forests of central hills and southwestern lowlands. Flies swiftly; sometimes spotted as it flies from underside of a leaf where it often rests. Encountered in open areas early morning, flying haltingly in search of food and mates. Retreats into forest to avoid mid-day heat except when overcast. Likely to be seen at Sinharaja (Kudawa) and forested areas in Deniyaya.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Indian Awl King
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Ceylon Awl

Lycaenidae: the Blues

Members of the Lycaenidae (Lycaenids) are small to medium-sized butterflies. Most are iridescent blue on the upperside with various patterns and colors on the underside. Despite their common name, many species have no blue, but are shades of red, orange, brown or black. They are widely distributed with about 5000 species worldwide, though the majority are found in the tropics, with 86 species having been recorded in Sri Lanka.

Adults are generally moderate to strong fliers. Most feed on the nectar of flowers, but some feed on fruit, tree sap or decaying matter. Several species mudsip. They generally inhabit open sunny places though some are forest dwellers.

Lycaenid eggs are usually a smooth or pitted dome, and white, cream or orange. The larva is usually slug-like with a small retractable head. Many are associated with ants and have specialized organs that provide food to the ant and produce substances that appear to affect the ant's behavior. The pupa is usually short and rounded with a girdle around the middle, and is usually attached to the larval food plant with a silk pad. Some species pupate in crevices or under leaf debris or on the larval food plant. The larvae of most species feed on leaves, but some feed on flowers, fruits or seeds. One species in Sri Lanka, the Apefly (*Spalgis epius*), is carnivorous and feeds on mealybugs.

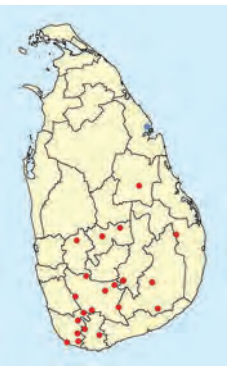
The immature stages and larval food plants of Lycaenids in Sri Lanka have been described except for the following: Ormiston's Oakblue (*Arhopala ormistoni*), Hampson's Hedge Blue (*Acytolepis lilacea*), Plain Hedge Blue (*Celastrina lavendularis*), Pointed Lineblue (*Ionolyce helicon*), White-tipped Lineblue (*Prosotas noreia*), White Hedge Blue (*Udara akasa*), Singalese Hedge Blue (*Udara singalensis*), Clouded Silverline (*Spindasis nubilus*), Plumbeous Silverline (*Spindasis schistacea*), Indian Red Flash (*Rapala iarbus*), Malabar Flash (*Rapala lankana*), Common Onyx (*Horaga onyx*), Brown Onyx (*Horaga albimacula*), and Ceylon Indigo Royal (*Tajuria arida*).

Common Imperial (*Cheritra freja*)

38–42 mm. Individuals with broken tails resemble Peacock Royal; tornal spots not crowned with orange scales. A forest dweller; common in the wet zone Jan–Apr; a few fly year-round. Also occurs in cinnamon plantations, on leaves of which the larva feeds. In the dry zone, mostly confined to riverine habitats, often near vines of *Entada rheedii*, its most widely used larval food plant. Flies high in the canopy, descending occasionally to delight a photographer.

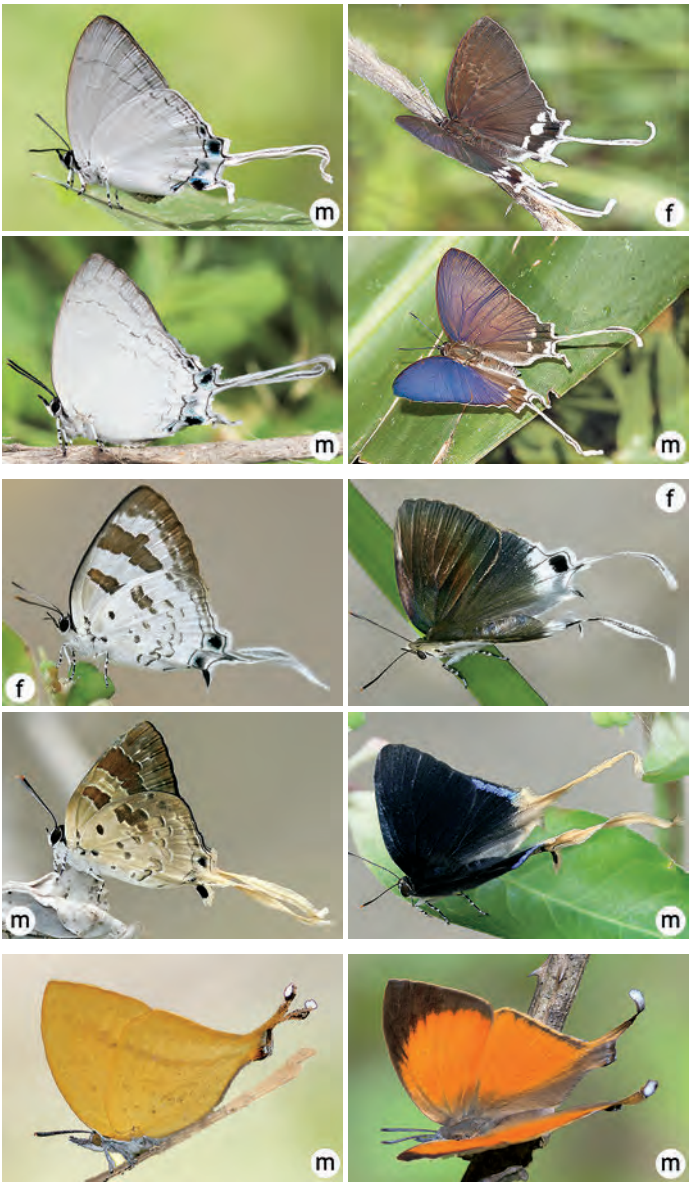
Plane (*Bindahara phocides*)

38–42 mm. Recognized by its long tails, and spots and bands on underside. Now rather rare; mostly found in the wet zone and intermediate zone in isolated pockets of primary and secondary forests. Encountered most often near its larval food plants, *Salacia reticulata* and *S. chinensis*, whose fruit the larva eats. Flies Jun–Aug during fruiting season of its larval food plant; a few fly off-season. Regularly seen at Sinharaja Jun–Jul. Cunning at hiding itself in foliage despite its long tails; may escape detection by a casual observer. See taxonomic note on page 231.



Yamfly (*Loxura atymnus*) 36–40 mm (M64)

A dainty little butterfly with long tails. Widespread; common in wet zone forests below 1300 m asl; scattered colonies occur in dry and intermediate zones in moist habitats along rivers and streams; may be common in marshes, swamps and neglected rubber plantations. Females often encountered near vines of *Smilax* in search of tender leaves on which to lay eggs. Flies year-round but main flight season Mar–Jun. Usually flies low to the ground but often forages higher.



Common Imperial

Plane

Yamfly

Key to the identification of the Silverlines in Sri Lanka (*Spindasis*)

This key is only a guide: all species of *Spindasis* in Sri Lanka are variable in color and markings, and also have dry season and wet season forms. Females of Ceylon Silverline and Scarce Shot Silverline are sometimes difficult to distinguish from each other.

1. Bands on underside broad and cinnamon-red, ground color yellow; a Y-shaped band below submarginal band. No orange markings on upperside forewing of male and female.
   .....**Long-banded Silverline (*Spindasis lohita*)**
1. Bands on underside not broad and not cinnamon-red
   2. Postbasal band on underside hindwing unbroken.
      3. Male: upperside hindwing seldom with iridescent blue; if present, a darker shade of blue than in Plumbeous Silverline.
         Female: upperside hindwing without conspicuous gray scales....
         .....**Common Silverline (*Spindasis vulcanus*)**
      3. Male: upperside hindwing with iridescent pale blue.
         Female: upperside hindwing with conspicuous gray scales....
         .....**Plumbeous Silverline (*Spindasis schistacea*)**
   2. Postbasal band on underside hindwing broken into 2 or 3 oval spots
      4. Underside ground color and bands brick-red....
         .....**Clouded Silverline (*Spindasis nubilus*)**
      4. Underside ground color not brick-red.
         5. Underside pale yellow, pale brown, or khaki-colored
            6. Male: upperside hindwing iridescent blue without a violet tinge; upperside forewing with iridescent blue up to vein CuA2; silver bands on underside narrower....
               .....**Ceylon Silverline (*Spindasis ictis*)**
            6. Male: upperside hindwing iridescent blue with a violet tinge; upperside forewing with iridescent blue extending above vein CuA2; silver bands on underside broader....
               .....**Scarce Shot Silverline (*Spindasis elima*)**
         5. Underside pale pinkish-gray; bands greatly reduced, narrow and broken up into short bands, spots and streaks....
            .....**Green's Silverline (*Spindasis greeni*)**

Green's Silverline

See also pages 96–97

Long-banded Silverline

See also pages 96–97


Common Silverline

See also pages 96–97

Plumbeous Silverline

See also pages 96–97

Clouded Silverline

See also pages 98–99

Ceylon Silverline

See also pages 98–99

Scarce Shot Silverline

See also pages 98–99

Nymphalidae: the Brush-foots

Members of the Nymphalidae (Nymphalids) are mostly medium-sized to large butterflies that are usually orange, brown, or black with white markings. Their common name refers to their hairy, brush-like legs. They are distributed worldwide with over 6000 species, of which 68 have been recorded in Sri Lanka.

The appearance, behavior and habitats of Nymphalids are varied as might be expected from such a large, diverse group. The adults are usually strong fliers. Some species are migratory. While some species feed on nectar, others feed on tree-sap, bird-droppings, dung and rotting fruit. They occupy habitats that range from arid thorn scrub to wet forests.

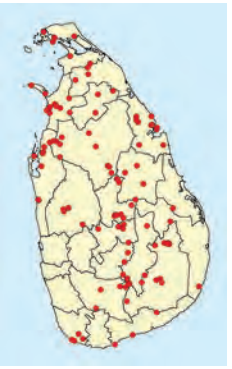
Nymphalid eggs are variable in size and shape, and are usually white, yellow, brown or green. They may be smooth and rounded or ribbed or sculptured with fine projections. The mature larva is smooth in some species whereas others have branched spines or hairs (setae); some have horns on the head. Larvae are often cryptically colored and gregarious. In many species, the larva builds a shelter using its own silk and the leaves of the larval food plant. The pupa is usually green or brown with white and black markings. The pupae of different species have different shapes, but all hang solely by the cremaster from a pad of silk. The immature stages and larval food plants of all Nymphalids in Sri Lanka have been described except for those of the following: Lobed Beak (*Libythea laius*), Ceylon Forester (*Lethe dynsate*), Cingalese Bushbrown (*Mycalesis rama*), and Common Treebrown (*Lethe rohria*).

Black Prince (*Rohana parisatis*) 45–50 mm (M127)

Female variable on upperside. Male dark blackish-brown (see page 150). A forest dweller of the mid-hills from 500–1200 m asl and of the low hills in the dry plains. Main flight season Jan–Apr; a few fly year-round. Knuckles supports a fair population due to the high density of its larval food plant (*Celtis*). Flies in the canopy searching for sap oozing from branches and tree trunks; settles on the ground now and again to feed on fallen fruit.

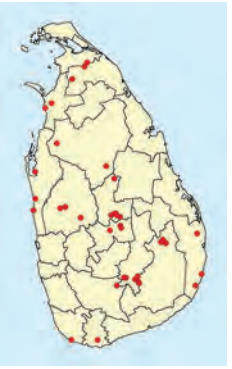
Angled Castor (*Ariadne ariadne*)

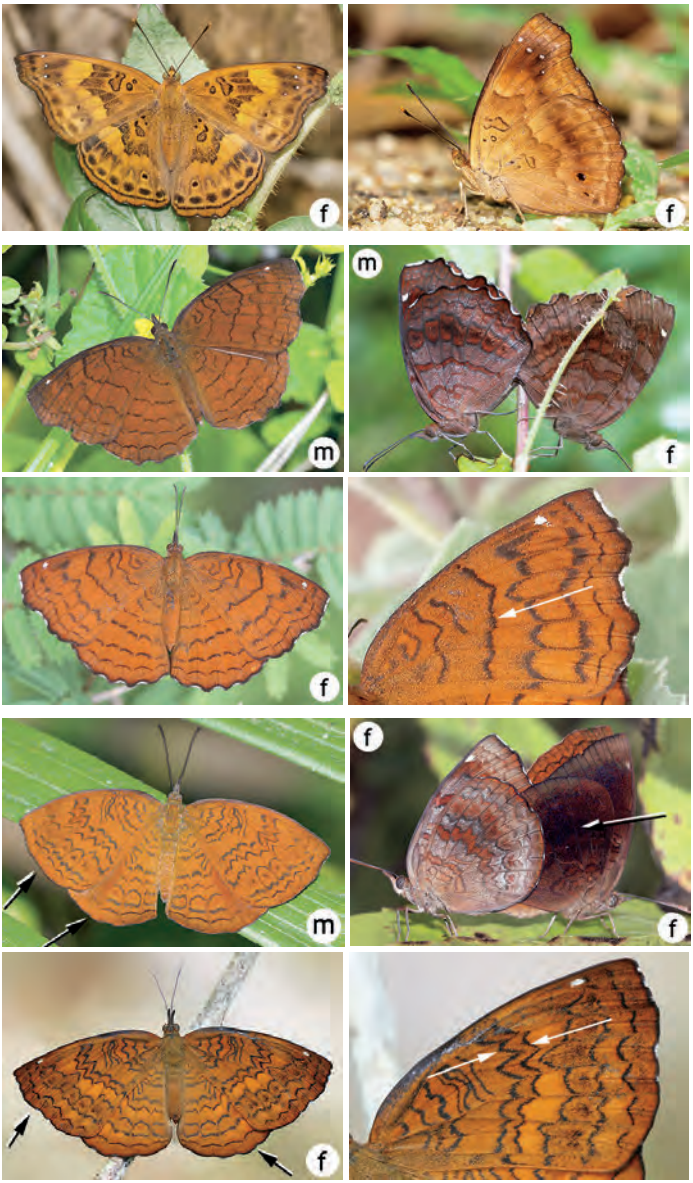
45–60 mm. Similar to Common Castor but lines on upperside not paired and not jagged. Common; widely distributed in waste places and shrub jungle of drier areas, rather rare in the wet zone. Flies year-round; sometimes numerous in places with dense stands of species of *Tragia*, its larval food plants. Feeds on nectar but also attracted to exudates of various plants. Flight characteristic: a few weak wing beats followed by an extended glide. Usually flies near ground, seldom in the tree tops.



Common Castor (*Ariadne merione*)

45–60 mm. Similar to Angled Castor but upperside with paired, jagged median lines; female with wing margins smooth or only slightly wavy; male with dark maroon patch on underside and smooth wing margins. Habitats in which it lives and its behavior very similar to those of Angled Castor, in whose company it often flies. Reduces competition for the same larval food plant by laying its eggs later or earlier than Angled Castor.

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Black Prince: female
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Angled Castor
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Common Castor
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Papilionidae: the Swallowtails

Members of the Papilionidae (Papilionids) are mostly medium-sized to large butterflies, usually colorful and strikingly patterned. Many have no tails despite their common name. There are about 500 species distributed worldwide, but most are found in the tropics. Fifteen species have been recorded in Sri Lanka.

The family is widespread in the island in all climatic zones and elevations and in many different habitats including forests, meadows and urban areas. Adults are strong fliers, and some species join migratory flights. Most feed on the nectar of flowers, but some occasionally feed on scat and dead animal matter. Males of most species mudsip, and patrol their territory looking for a receptive mate. Courtship is often a long drawn-out process: in some species, the male hovers near the female for minutes at a time.

Eggs are spherical, white or cream or orange, and usually smooth, but in some species they are covered with a glue-like substance that makes them look warty. The mature larva is stout; some species have fleshy tubercles while others have a humped thorax with eye-spots. Papilionid larvae are characterized by the presence of a pair of osmeteria, filamentous structures hidden just above the head; these are everted when the larva is disturbed, excreting butyric acid to prevent attacks from predators such as ants. The larvae of some species are well-camouflaged amidst the food plant on which they rest, while others are poisonous and aposematically colored, or resemble an inanimate object such as a bird dropping. The larvae feed on leaves. The pupa is usually well-camouflaged and is attached to the substrate by a cremaster and supported by a thoracic girdle. The immature stages and larval food plants of all Papilionids in Sri Lanka have been documented except for those of the Five-bar Swordtail (*Graphium antiphates*).

Ceylon Rose (*Pachliopta jophon*) 90–130 mm (M133)

Similar to Common Rose but streaks on forewings fewer, broader; white patch in discal cell more extensive. Uncommon; forest-loving lowland wet zone species; strays into home gardens. Main flight season Apr–Aug. A regular at Bodhinagala. Flies high in the canopy to feed on forest blooms; descends to feed on shrubs. Flies leisurely, protected from bird predation by disagreeable chemicals accumulated as a larva.

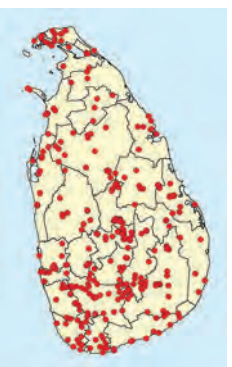
Common Rose (*Pachliopta aristolochiae*) 80–110 mm (M134)

Similar to Ceylon Rose but smaller, forewing streaks finer, more numerous; white patch in discal cell restricted to base. Female with rounder wings. Common; widely distributed. Flies year-round; frequently seen in home gardens. Fond of flowers of purple-flowered *Duranta erecta*, a commonly planted exotic. On the wing much earlier than most butterflies, protected from predation by birds by poisonous chemicals accumulated from its larval food plant.

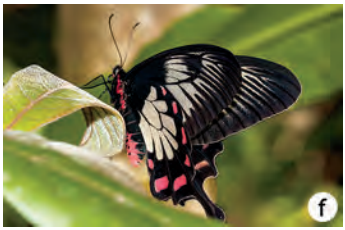
Crimson Rose (*Pachliopta hector*) 90–110 mm (M135)

Crimson spots on female tinged with orange. Common, widely distributed in jungles and waste places in all climatic zones; commonest in dry and intermediate zones. Those seen along southwest coast and a few kilometers inland mostly in migration, only a few breeding. Sightings of adults flying towards or coming in from southern tip of India not uncommon; some seen mid-ocean. Behavior and habitats similar to those of Common Rose.

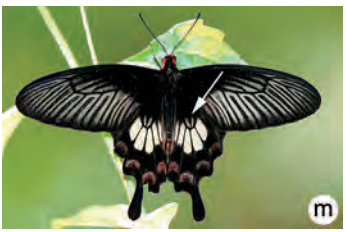
Common Mormon (*Papilio polytes*)



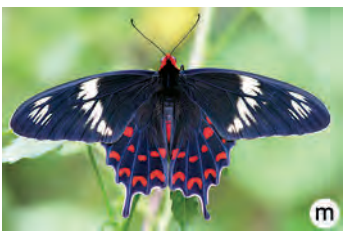
80–115 mm. Female appears in three forms: form cyrus resembles the male Common Mormon and the male Red Helen; form stichius resembles the Common Rose and the Ceylon Rose but forewing outer margin edged with white streaks; form romulus resembles the Crimson Rose but with a hindwing tornal spot; distinguished from the Roses by its all-black abdomen. Commonest and most widespread swallowtail; occurs from sea level to the highest mountains. Common in home gardens and urban areas as larvae feed on various common species of *Citrus* and *Murraya*. Male flies hurriedly, generally a meter or so above the ground; female flies slowly. See the next page for the male, and the female form cyrus.

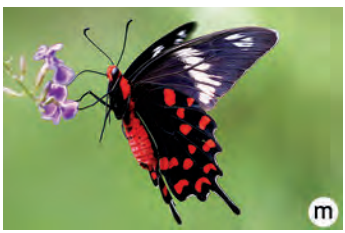


Ceylon Rose

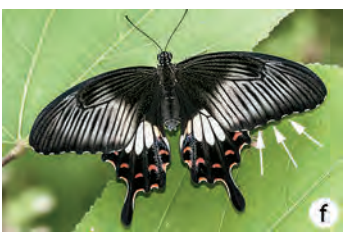


Common Rose

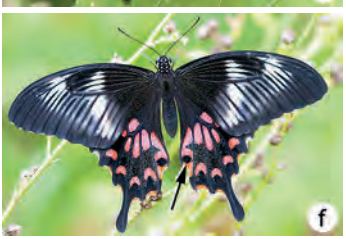




Crimson Rose



Common Mormon: stichius



Common Mormon: romulus

Pieridae: the Whites and Yellows

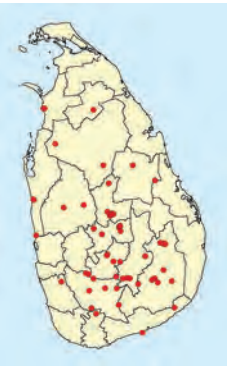
Members of the Pieridae (Pierids) are mostly medium-sized and predominantly white or yellow with various colored markings. There are about 1000 species, widely distributed throughout the world; 28 species have been recorded in Sri Lanka.

Adults are generally strong fliers, keeping to the lower and mid-levels though some fly high in the canopy. Most Pierids in Sri Lanka are widespread throughout the drier parts of the island in open meadows, but a few species are found in the forests of the wetter areas. Many species have seasonal forms, but they often fly together. Several species migrate in groups that can number in the millions. They feed mostly on the nectar of flowers. The males and females of many species settle on wet soil to mudsip.

Eggs are more or less spindle-shaped with ridges, and are usually white when first laid, turning shades of red or orange within a day or two. The mature larva is slender, cylindrical, and smooth with fine setae (hairs) covering its body. It is usually green with various markings and is well-concealed when resting on its larval food plant, and feeds on leaves. The pupa is angular, often with dorsal ridges and projections, and sometimes with a prominent tip, or snout; it is attached to the substrate with a cremaster and a thoracic girdle.

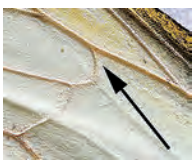
The immature stages and larval food plants of all Pierids in the island have been documented except for those of two rare species — the Plain Puffin (*Appias indra*) and the Lesser Gull (*Cepora nadina*).

Common Albatross (*Appias albina*)

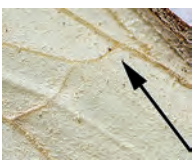


40–50 mm. Male similar to male Lesser Albatross and male Striped Albatross but differs as follows; underside ground color white to cream; forewing more pointed and outer margin slightly curved (more curved in Lesser Albatross; very straight in Striped Albatross); angle made by cross-vein with upper edge of cell acute (as in Lesser Albatross but not acute in Striped Albatross; see images below). Female with 4–5 white spots on apex of upperside forewing (2–3 in Lesser Albatross); spots merge with ground color in the extreme dry season form due to reduced black scales. Female yellow form flava with markings similar to the white form. In both sexes, antenna black with a pale yellowish-brown tip (in Striped Albatross, underside of antenna and apical third of the club bright yellowish-brown). Common; flies in very large numbers Feb–Mar when it joins migrations and may be seen island-wide; a few fly year-round. A denizen of the dry zone jungles. Congregates near its larval food plant, *Drypetes sepiaria* (and probably also *D. gardneri* in the mid-hills).

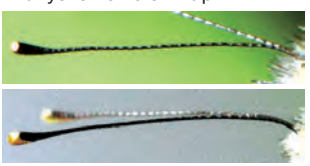
Common Albatross: antenna black with yellowish-brown tip



Common Albatross: acute angle



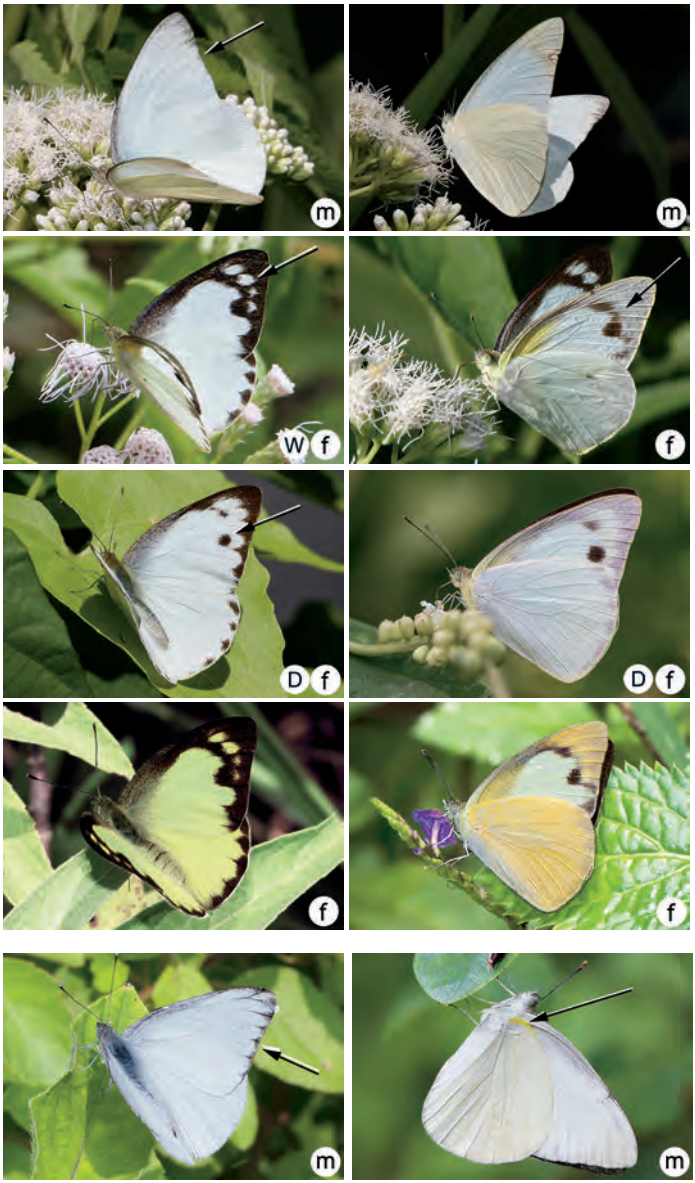
Striped Albatross: obtuse angle



Striped Albatross: antenna underside and apical third yellowish-brown

Striped Albatross (*Appias libythea*) 50–60 mm (M143)

Male similar to male Common Albatross and male Lesser Albatross (see also above) but chalk-white with a yellow streak at base of underside hindwing; triangular black scaling along upperside forewing outer margin runs a short distance along veins; scaling much reduced in dry season form. Common; commonest in the driest areas, scarce in the wet zone. Flies year-round. Joins migrations in fair numbers in Jan–Mar. See next page for images of the female.



Common Albatross

Striped Albatross male

Riodinidae: the Metalmarks

Members of the Riodinidae (Riodinids) are called Metalmarks because most of the species have small metallic-looking spots on the wings. They are widely distributed, with over 1500 species throughout the world though the majority of species are found in Central and South America. Sri Lanka has only one species, the Plum Judy (*Abisara echerius*), which is without metallic markings.

Adults are usually not strong fliers, though many species fly in the canopy. They are found in forested areas as well as open habitats. Most species feed on the nectar of flowers, but the Plum Judy feeds on the exudates on leaves and other plant parts.

Eggs are usually rounded. The larva and pupa are usually laxly hairy. The pupa is attached with a girdle either to the larval food plant or to debris on the ground. The larvae of some Riodinids are associated with ants, but not the species in Sri Lanka. The immature stages and larval food plants of the Plum Judy are well-known.

Plum Judy: egg, larva, pupa

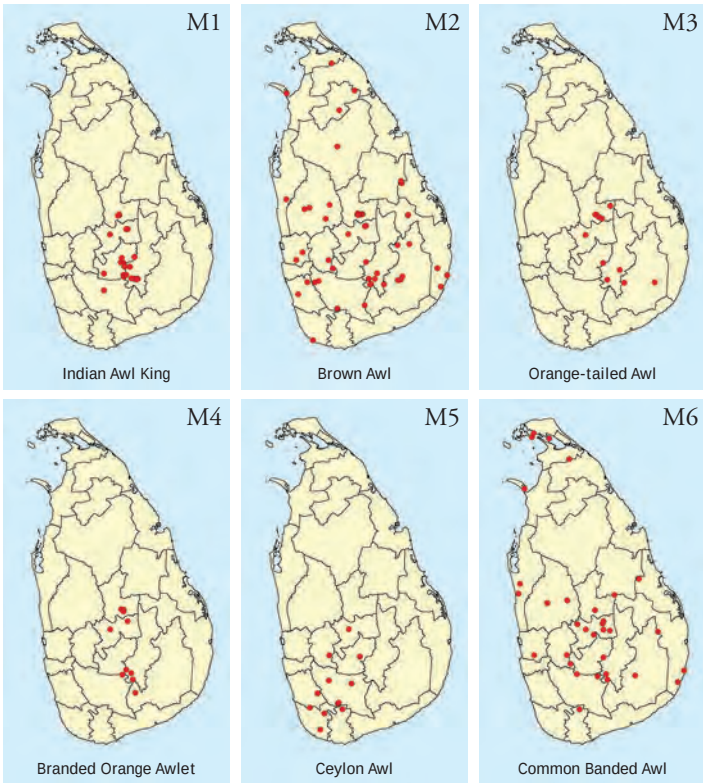
Plum Judy (*Abisara echerius*)
40–50mm (M147)

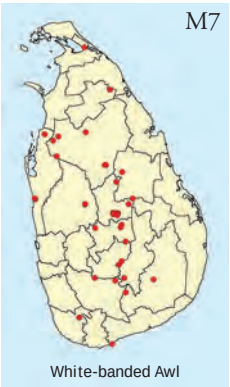
Purplish-brown with a small "tooth" on the hindwing. Perhaps the only species to consistently hold its wings in a V-shaped posture when settled, and twist and turn its body in a "dance". Occurs in all climatic zones except the arid zone; inhabits forests and well-wooded areas. Large populations were once common around the wetlands of Colombo that had good stands of *Ardisia elliptica*, one of its larval food plants. Both sexes fly about during the day; male very active towards dusk, and flies back and forth with great speed in open spaces in search of females. Can be easily mistaken for a moth in the dim light.

Plum Judy

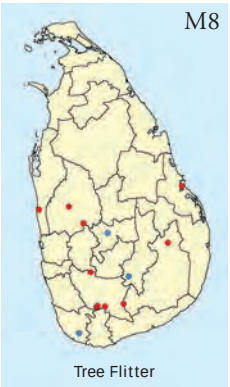
Appendix A. Distribution maps

- Blue dots represent historical records, i.e. observed locations from Ormiston (1924) or from Woodhouse (1950) that have not been recorded since.
- Red dots represent observations since 1950.
- Orange dots represent recent doubtful records.





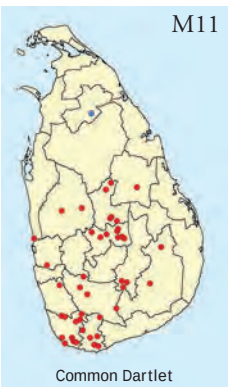
White-banded Awl



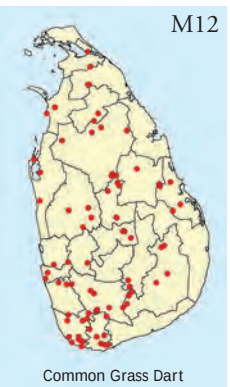
Tree Flitter

Pallid Dart

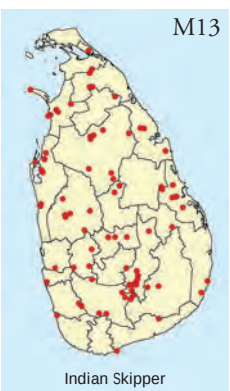
Yellow Palm Dart



Common Dartlet

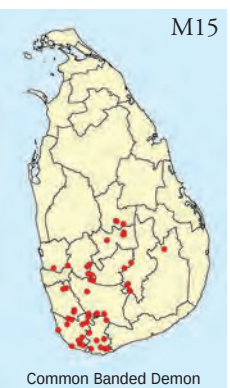


Common Grass Dart



Indian Skipper

Restricted Demon



Common Banded Demon

Appendix B: Checklist and taxonomic notes

Families, subfamilies, tribes, genera and species are presented in alphabetical order.

Hesperiidae

Subfamily Coeliadinae/Tribe -

___ Brown Awl — *Badamia exclamationis* (Fabricius, 1775)
___ Orange-tailed Awl — *Bibasis sena sena* (Moore, [1866])
___ Branded Orange Awlet — *Burara oedipodea ataphus* (Watson, 1893)
___ Indian Awl King — *Choaspes benjaminii benjaminii* (Guérin-Méneville, 1843)
___ Ceylon Awl — *Hasora badra lanka* Evans, 1926
___ Common Banded Awl — *Hasora chromus chromus* (Cramer, [1780])
___ White-banded Awl — *Hasora taminatus taminatus* (Hübner, 1818)

Subfamily Hesperiinae/Tribe Aeromachini

___ Bush Hopper — *Ampittia dioscorides singa* Evans, 1949
___ Hedge Hopper (E) — *Baracus vittatus* (C. Felder, 1862)
___ Banana Redeye — *Erionota torus* Evans, 1941
___ Banded Redeye — *Gangara lebadea subfasciata* (Moore, 1878)
___ Giant Redeye — *Gangara thyrsis clothilda* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1869)
___ Ceylon Ace (E) — *Halpe ceylonica* Moore, 1878
___ Rare Ace (E) — *Halpe egena* (R. Felder, 1868)
___ Tree Flitter — *Hyarotis adrastus adrastus* (Stoll, [1780])
___ Chestnut Bob — *Iambrix salsala luteipalpis* (Plötz, 1886)
___ Common Redeye — *Matapa aria* (Moore, [1866])
___ Restricted Demon — *Notocrypta curvifascia curvifascia* (C&R Felder, 1862)
___ Common Banded Demon — *Notocrypta paralysos alysia* Evans, 1926
___ Indian Palm Bob — *Suastus gremius subgrisea* (Moore, 1878)
___ Ceylon Palm Bob — *Suastus minuta minut*a (Moore, 1877)
___ Decorated Ace (E) — *Thoressa decorata* (Moore, [1881])
___ Grass Demon — *Udaspes folus* (Cramer, [1775])

Subfamily Hesperiinae/Tribe Baorini

___ Paintbrush Swift (E) — *Baoris penicillata* Moore, [1881]
___ Wallace's Swift — *Borbo cinnara* (Wallace, 1866)
___ Blank Swift — *Caltoris kumara lanka* (Evans, 1926)
___ Philippine Swift — *Caltoris philippina philippina* (Herrich-Schäffer, 1869)
___ Smallest Swift — *Parnara bada bada* (Moore, 1878
___ Little Branded Swift — *Pelopidas agna agna* (Moore, [1866])
___ Conjoined Swift — *Pelopidas conjuncta narooa* (Moore, 1878)
___ Small Branded Swift — *Pelopidas mathias mathias* (Fabricius, 1798)
___ Large Branded Swift — *Pelopidas subochracea subochracea* (Moore, 1878)

Subfamily Hesperiinae/Tribe Taractrocerini

___ Yellow Palm Dart — *Cephrenes trichopepla* (Lower, 1908)
___ Common Dartlet — *Oriens goloides* (Moore, [1881])
___ Pallid Dart — *Potanthus pallida* (Evans, 1932)
___ Common Dart — *Potanthus pseudomaesa pseudomaesa* (Moore, [1881])
___ Tropic Dart (E) — *Potanthus satra* Fruhstorfer, 1911
___ Common Grass Dart — *Taractrocera maevius* (Fabricius, 1793)
___ Dark Palmdart — *Telicota bambusae lanka* (Evans, 1932)

The authors

Michael was a university academic and corporate database specialist and consultant. He is now retired, turned farmer, naturalist, citizen scientist and public speaker on the conservation of butterflies. Drawing on his 50 years of studying butterflies, he and his wife Nancy have written extensively on the biology of many species of butterflies in Sri Lanka and have published their work in scientific journals as well as in general interest publications. Their seminal work, *The Butterfly Fauna of Sri Lanka* (2016), was widely hailed as a key publication that set a high bar for all subsequent works on butterflies. Michael also edited the *Butterfly Conservation Action Plan of Sri Lanka* (2012) and authored *The Taxonomy and Conservation Status of Butterflies in Sri Lanka* (2012). He has shared his knowledge with professionals and amateurs alike and has made presentations to students in universities and schools and to members of various public and private organizations to promote the conservation of butterflies in Sri Lanka.

Nancy has had varied careers in biological research and IT. She is now retired and turned naturalist, collaborating with Michael on his work on butterflies and specializing in the study of the dragonflies of Sri Lanka — she has described two species and one subspecies new to science, and has coached several budding naturalists. She is also the author or co-author of several scientific publications on dragonflies, and is co-author of *Dragonfly Fauna of Sri Lanka: Distribution and Biology, with Threat Status of its Endemics* (2014). She was president of the Toronto Entomologists' Association in Canada from 1998–2004, and board member (2013–2015) and president-elect (2015–2017) of the Worldwide Dragonfly Association.

This compact, easy-to-carry guide provides a wealth of information to aid both amateur naturalists and professionals to identify all the butterflies of Sri Lanka in the field.

Each species is illustrated with images of live individuals and is described with key information on appearance, behavior, habitat, flight period, and prime locations for observing them. Distribution maps show current and historical records. Identification of similar species is made easier with added identification keys, images and helpful hints.

The authors
Following the acclaim received by their landmark publication, *The Butterfly Fauna of Sri Lanka* (2016), George and Nancy van der Poorten use their expertise to produce a field guide that aims to help to promote the conservation of butterflies in Sri Lanka.

ISBN 978-1-77136-605-2