

Diversity and Distribution of Butterflies (Lepidoptera-Rhopalocera) along with Altitudinal Gradient and Vegetation Types at Lahoul Valley, Trans-Himalaya Region, India

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Abstract : Himalaya is one of the most fascinating ranges in the world. In India, it comprises 18 percent of the land area. Lahoul valley which is a part of Trans-Himalaya region is well known for its unique, diverse flora and fauna. It lies in the North-Eastern corner of the state Himachal Pradesh where its altitude ranges between 2500m to 5000m. Vegetation of this region is dry-temperate to alpine type. The diversity of the area is very less, rare, unique and highly endemic. But today, as a lot of environmental degradation has taken place in this hot spot of biodiversity because of frequent developmental and commercial activities which lead to the diversity of this area comes under a real threat. Therefore, as part of the research, butterflies which are known for their attractiveness as well as usefulness to the ecosystem, are used for the study. The diversity of butterflies of a particular area not only provides a healthy environment but also serves as the first step of conservation to the biodiversity. Their distribution in different habitats and altitude type helps us to understand the species richness and abundance in an area. Moreover, different environmental parameters which affect the butterfly community has also recorded. Hence, the present study documents the butterfly diversity in an unexplored habitat and altitude types at Lahoul valley. The valley has been surveyed along with altitudinal gradients (from 2500m to 4500m) and in various habitats like agriculture land, grassland, scrubland, riverine and in different types of forests. Very rare species of butterflies have been explored, and these will be discussed along with different parameters during the presentation.

Keywords : butterflies, diversity, Lahoul valley, altitude, vegetation

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