



## Butterflies: it's raining lifers at Rainforest Retreat

We had been to Rainforest Retreat (12.477°N, 75.709°E), an organic plantation of coffee, cardamom, and vanilla in Galibeedu, Kodagu district, Karnataka as part of our RHATC fellowship. We reached the Rainforest Retreat on 30 October 2021 afternoon. The last study on butterflies of Kodagu district was done 86 years ago (Home 1935). On 31 October after breakfast at 0930 am, our hunt for butterflies began in and around the estate. To our surprise we spotted five Medus Brown in the same area. They were co-operative enough to give us a chance to take photographs. Several white butterflies were flying near the bushes. Though we waited for 10 to 20 minutes, they were not in the mood to settle down. After that, we went for the ridge walk adjacent to Rainforest Retreat's Mojo Plantation. As we descended, we could spot some restless grass yellows. Butterfly activity started to increase steadily and we spotted the rare Dark Pierrot and a tiny Dingy Scrub Hopper. We enjoyed capturing commonly seen butterflies such as Chocolate Pansy, Lemon Pansy, Common Sailor, and Plain Tiger. As we strolled along the coffee plantation, we found a Blue Admiral and an active Common Map. As we crossed the small water stream we were hoping we could

see a lot of butterflies mud puddling. We found only one Dark Blue Tiger sipping the minerals from the soil.

On 1 November, Dr. Sujatha Goel, the organic plantation owner, took us for a plantation tour and showed us a wide variety of trees and crops. As the weather was cloudy, butterfly activity was pretty less. Later, a little sunlight brought butterflies like Psyche, Plain Tiger, Common Gull, and Common Wanderer out into the open.

An interesting observation during our photography was seeing a female Danaid Eggfly. The female mimics in appearance the similar-sized Plain Tiger, a toxic butterfly with the toxic Milkweed *Calotropis gigantea* as its host plant. The vibrant colour of the Plain Tiger advertises its unpalatable nature to predators around, so the Danaid Eggfly female sends out the same signal although not being toxic. In addition to showing Batesian mimicry, the females were seen flying with the Plain Tigers.

We encountered a total of 58 butterflies, Nymphalidae was the most abundant family with 26 species (44.8%), followed

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## In and around Rainforest Retreat.

by Lycaenidae with 10 species (17.2%), Papilionidae with eight species (13.7%), Pieridae & Hesperidae with seven species each (12% each), and Riodinidae with no representation. The high abundance of family Nymphalidae in the area may probably be attributed to the high abundance of grasses and reeds, which form the major food plants of these butterflies. The localities which yielded higher diversity have very good flowering plants and dense vegetation which provide favourable habitat for butterflies. Two species are protected under Schedule I, one species under Schedule II, and one species under Schedule IV of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. The native tree

composition and organic farming technique may have helped to support this great variety of butterflies.

As SS was first time visiting the Western Ghats, most of the species were lifers for him, his first time encounters of them. You can find some of the Western Ghats endemic butterflies at Rainforest Retreat by donating very little blood to the leeches, so be prepared for it and try to inspect the ground before lying down for an eye-level photo as there may be an innocent Malabar Pit Viper resting after a handsome meal of a Malabar Gliding Frog.



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## List of butterflies observed at Rainforest Retreat, Galibeedu, Kodagu, Karnataka.

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Schedule of WPA-1972
<b>Papilionidae (Swallowtails)</b>			
1	<i>Graphium teredon</i> (C. & R. Felder, 1865)	Southern/ Narrow-banded Bluebottle	—
2	<i>Graphium doson eleius</i> (Fruhstorfer, 1907)	Common Jay	—
3	<i>Graphium agamemnon menides</i> (Fruhstorfer, 1904)	Tailed Jay	—
4	<i>Pachliopta hector</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Crimson Rose	I
5	<i>Pachliopta aristolochiae</i> (Fabricius, 1775)	Common Rose	—
6	<i>Papilio polytes romulus</i> (Cramer, 1755)	Common Mormon	—
7	<i>Papilio helenus daksha</i> (Hampson, 1889)	Red Helen	—
8	<i>Papilio polymnestor</i> (Cramer, 1775)	Blue Mormon	—
<b>Pieridae (Whites &amp; Yellow)</b>			
9	<i>Eurema hecabe hecabe</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Common Grass Yellow	—
10	<i>Eurema blanda silhetana</i> (Wallace, 1867)	Three-spot Grass Yellow	—
11	<i>Catopsilia Pomona</i> (Fabricius, 1775)	Lemon Or Common Emigrant	—
12	<i>Hebomoia glaucippe australis</i> (Butler, 1898)	Great Orange-tip	—
13	<i>Pareronia hippia</i> (Fabricius, 1787)	Common Wanderer	—
14	<i>Delias eucharis</i> (Drury, 1773)	Common Jezebel	—
15	<i>Cepora nerissa phryne</i> (Fabricius, 1775)	Common Gull	—
<b>Nymphalidae (Brush-footed)</b>			
16	<i>Parantica agela agela</i> (Stoll, 1782)	Glassy Tiger	—
17	<i>Tirumala limniace exotica</i> (Gmelin, 1790)	Blue Tiger	—
18	<i>Tirumala septentrionis dravidarum</i> (Fruhstorfer, 1899)	Dark Blue Tiger	—
19	<i>Danaus chrysippus chrysippus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Plain Tiger	—
20	<i>Danaus genutia genutia</i> (Cramer, 1779)	Striped Tiger	—
21	<i>Euploea core core</i> (Cramer, 1780)	Common Crow	—
22	<i>Euploea sylvestre coreta</i> (Godart, 1819)	Double-branded Crow	—
23	<i>Melanitis leda leda</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Common Evening Brown	—
24	<i>Lethe rohria neelgheriensis</i> (Guerin Meneville, 1843)	Common Tree Brown	—
25	<i>Mycalesis patnia junonia</i> (Butler, 1868)	Glad-eye Bushbrown	—
26	<i>Ypthima baldus madrasa</i> (Evans, 1924)	Common Five-ring	—
27	<i>Ypthima huebneri</i> (Kirby, 1871)	Common Four-ring	—
28	<i>Ypthima ceylonica</i> (Hewitson, 1865)	White Four-ring	—

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	Scientific Name	Common Name	Schedule of WPA-1972
<b>Nymphalidae (Brush-footed)</b>			
29	<i>Cupha erymanthis maja</i> (Fruhstorfer, 1898)	Rustic	—
30	<i>Neptis hylas varmona</i> (Moore, 1872)	Common Sailor	—
31	<i>Orsotriaena medus mandata</i> (Moore, 1857)	Medus Brown	—
32	<i>Neptis jumbah nalanda</i> (Fruhstorfer, 1908)	Chestnut-streaked Sailor	—
33	<i>Elymnias caudata</i> (Butler, 1871)	Tailed Palmfly	—
34	<i>Kaniska canace viridis</i> (Evans, 1924)	Blue Admiral	—
35	<i>Athyma ranga karwara</i> (Fruhstorfer, 1906)	Blackvein Sergeant	—
36	<i>Cyrestis thyodamas indica</i> (Evans, 1924)	Common Map	—
37	<i>Mycalesis anaxias anaxias</i> (Hewitson, 1862)	White-bar Bushbrown	II
38	<i>Junonia iphita pluvialis</i> (Fruhstorfer, 1900)	Chocolate Pansy	—
39	<i>Junonia lemonias vaisya</i> (Fruhstorfer, 1912)	Lemon Pansy	—
40	<i>Hypolimnas misippus</i> (Linnaeus, 1764)	Danaid Eggfly	I
41	<i>Hypolimnas bolina jacintha</i> (Drury, 1773)	Great Eggfly	—
<b>Lycaenidae (Blues)</b>			
42	<i>Nacaduba kurava canaraica</i> (Toxopeu, 1927)	Transparent Six Lineblue	—
43	<i>Prosotas dubiosa indica</i> (Evans, 1925)	Tailless Lineblue	—
44	<i>Tarucus ananda</i> (de Niceville, 1884)	Dark Pierrot	IV
45	<i>Spindasis lohita lazularia</i> (Moore, 1881)	Long-banded Silverline	—
46	<i>Discolampa ethion ethion</i> (Westwood, 1851)	Banded Blue Pierrot	—
47	<i>Caleta decidia</i> (Hewitson, 1876)	Angled Pierrot	—
48	<i>Jamides celeno aelianus</i> (Fabricius, 1793)	Common Cerulean	—
49	<i>Jamides bochus bochus</i> (Stoll, 1782)	Dark Cerulean	—
50	<i>Zizula hylax hylax</i> (Fabricius, 1775)	Tiny Grass Blue	—
51	<i>Zizeeria karsandra</i> (Moore, 1865)	Dark Grass Blue	—
<b>Hesperiidae (Skippers)</b>			
52	<i>Lambrix salsala luteipalpis</i> (Plotz, 1886)	Chestnut Bob	—
53	<i>Pothanthus</i> sp.	Dart	—
54	<i>Udaspes folus</i> (Cramer, 1775)	Grass Demon	—
55	<i>Pseudocoladenia dan dan</i> (Fabricius, 1787)	Fulvous Pied Flat	—
56	<i>Sarangesa dasahara davidsoni</i> (Swinhoe, 1912)	Common Small Flat	—
57	<i>Caprona ransonnettii potiphera</i> (Hewitson, 1873)	Golden Angle	—
58	<i>Aeromachus dubius</i> (Elwes & Edwards, 1897)	Dingy Scrub Hopper	—

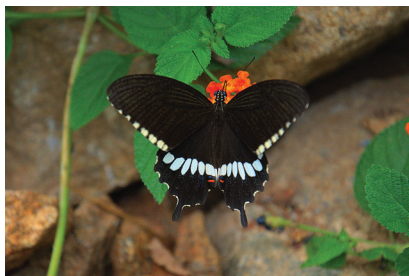


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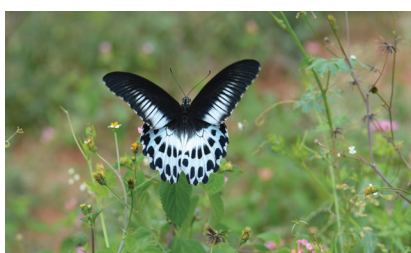
**Tailed Jay.**



**Common Mormon.**



**Red Helen\*.**



**Blue Mormon.**



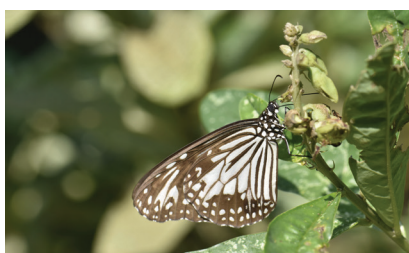
**Common Grass Yellow.**



**Common Jezebel.**



**Common Gull.**



**Glassy Tiger.**



**Dark Blue Tiger.**



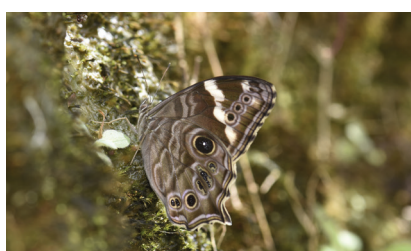
**Plain Tiger.**



**Striped Tiger.**



**Common Crow.**



**Common Tree Brown.**



**Glad-eye Bushbrown\*.**



**Common Four-ring.**



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**Rustic\*.**



**Common Sailor.**



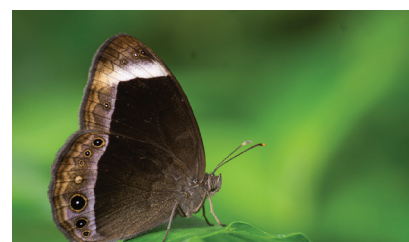
**Medus Brown.**



**Blue Admiral.**



**Common Map.**



**White-bar Bushbrown.**



**Chocolate Pansy.**



**Lemon Pansy.**



**Danaid Eggfly.**



**Transparent Six Lineblue.**



**Tailless Lineblue.**



**Dark Pierrot.**



**Long-banded Silverline\*.**



**Banded Blue Pierrot.**



**Common Cerulean.**



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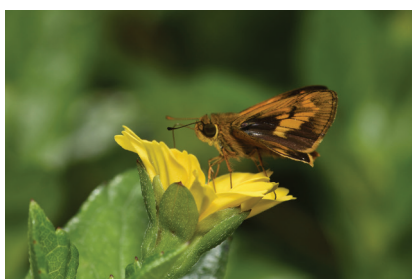
**Tiny Grass Blue.**



**Dark Grass Blue.**



**Chestnut Bob.**



**Dart.**



**Fulvous Pied Flat\*.**



**Common Small Flat.**



**Golden Angle\*.**

**Photo credits:** All the images were taken by C.V. Nishanth except the images indicated with an asterisk (\*) were taken by Supriya Samanta.

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## Reference

**Home, L.W.M. (1935).** Notes on Coorg butterflies. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 37: 669–674.

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