

REMINISCENCES OF STUDYING BUTTERFLIES IN NIGERIA

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A recently published paper on IITA, Ibadan by Bown *et al* (2011) in *The Nigerian Field* brought back memories of my time in Nigeria from 1978 to 1981. Then I was employed by Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria as a geologist in Lagos. I spent a second period from 1987 to 1989 in Port Harcourt, in eastern Nigeria.

I was a member of the Lagos branch of the Nigerian Field Society (NFS), and regularly made weekend field trips with family, friends and colleagues to various sites in western Nigeria within easy reach by road from Lagos. These visits included the forested areas of Ilaro, Olokemeji and IITA, Ibadan. We made several day trips to IITA and also on one occasion stayed for a weekend. There I recorded and studied butterflies in the secondary forest in the vicinity of the lake area. These observations, over a very limited period, in the 28 species recorded at IITA are shown in Table 1. The butterfly species is shown with its collection number and date recorded. This applies to the three tables in the paper.

The paper by Bown *et al* (2011) mentioned the neighbouring previously forested areas of Ilaro and Olokemeji, which unfortunately seem now to have disappeared. In my time, these sites were still extensively covered with good mature secondary forest with sizeable trees etc. and were excellent sites for all fields of natural history. Colleagues were very interested in the bird life whilst I preferred to observe and record the presence of butterflies. My observations of both these sites, with species numbers being 34 and 35 respectively for Ilaro and Olokemeji, are given in Tables 2 and 3, which help to highlight the similarity in species found at all three sites. In total, some 81 different species were recorded at these three sites over a very limited number of days spent in the field. One will note that the Olokemeji list contains two observations from May 1989 when I again made a visit to this area of Nigeria.

Thirty years ago there were still good secondary forested areas nearer to Lagos such as Agbara and Isheri. These sites had some similarity in species to the previous Ibadan area sites, but differences were noticeable. Further afield, the Lagos branch of the NFS made a weekend field trip to the Omo forest. There the butterfly population was sufficiently distinct from the other areas previously mentioned. This is believed to be due to the Omo forest's covering a much larger area and having a greater diversity of trees with a good mix of primary and secondary forest types.

Studying butterflies during the period I was in Nigeria was initially quite difficult, because of a lack of good quality publications. I initially referred to Williams (1976), Boorman (1970) and the nine part series by Boorman (e.g. Part 1 in 1957) issued by Ibadan University Press. Then in 1980, D'Abrera published his book, *Butterflies of the Afro-*

tropical Region, which gave a very extensive and comprehensive review of butterflies likely to be encountered in Nigeria. Later, in 1984, Ackery and Vane-Wright published their book on Milkweed butterflies which highlighted the Danainae to be found in West Africa as well as their worldwide occurrence.

I at that time tended to accept the preferred classification of butterflies as cited by D'Abrera (1980). This classification recognised distinct butterfly families such as Danaidae, Acraeidae and Satyridae. I still find that this has some merit rather than lumping all these as subfamilies of Nymphalidae. I am not a specialist entomologist and I leave that particular debate to the specialists. Without having access to the most recent publication of Larson (2005), used by Safian and Warren in Bown *et al* (2011), I can only surmise that the above persons have for good reasons accepted a different classification scheme from that put forward by D'Abrera (1980) and previous entomologists.

However, to keep a comparison with the previously mentioned paper on IITA, in this review I have kept the same classification of subfamilies as used by Safian and Warren (2011), even though I have a distinct preference for the family nomenclature. However, I do find it difficult to support the *Acraea* genus within subfamily Heliconiinae and prefer the subfamily Acraeinae. I also feel that the *Acraea* genus name should be retained for all the species rather than bringing in the subgenus *Actinote* name, which is more a South American genus.



Colotis Danae

<http://www.online-utility.org/image/gallery.jsp?title=Colotis+danae>

Looking at the table of recorded species at IITA, I can now add some seven more species to the IITA checklist, including *Papilio sosia* (?), *Appias phaola*, *Colotis danae*, *Acraea eponina*, *Acraea lycia*, *Acraea penelope* and *Junonia pelarga*. I consider *Acraea pseudegina* a subspecies of *Acraea natalica* (refer D'Abrera (1980)). The butterfly named as *Papilio sosia* is based on comparing the collected specimen with the photographs in D'Abrera (1980). It is noticeably different from *Papilio nireus* but not quite the exact sameness as *Papilio sosia* in the publication. I trust that all these seven species may still be found at IITA, some thirty years later.

In a similar vein, the checklists for Ilaro and Olokemeji also show additional species to the published IITA list in Bown *et al* (2011). Since all the three sites show many similarities to each other, it is believed to be definitely possible that with further collecting, these additional species will eventually be encountered at IITA.

*Junonia pelarga*

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Junonia_pelarga.JPG

This paper has only been a short review of butterflies recorded and studied in the early 1980's, some thirty years ago. Then I was a very keen amateur entomologist and a very strong supporter of the Lagos branch of the NFS. I have retained my membership of the NFS to this day and look forward with interest every year to a new annual publication of the NFS. This paper I would like to dedicate to another NGS member, a very good friend and colleague, Peter Alexander-Marrack who recently died (see obituary in this journal).

Table 1. Butterflies Recorded at IITA, Ibadan, 1980-1981

Family: PAPILIONIDAE

Graphium polices

Papilio cynorta

Papilio nireus

Papilio sosia ?

Subfamily: Papilioninae

Cramer, 1775 (DW082 – 10/80)

Fabricius, 1793 (DW233, 272 – 8/81, 10/81)

Linnaeus, 1758 (DW084, 273 – 10/80, 10/81)

Rothschild & Jordan, 1903 (DW083 – 10/80)

Family: PIERIDAE

Appias phaola

Subfamily: Pierinae

Doubleday, 1847 (DW091 – 10/80)

*Bellenois calypso**Colotis danae**Nepheronia thalassina***Family: NYMPHALIDAE***Danaus chrysippus**Amauris damocles***Family: NYMPHALIDAE***Acraea encedon**Acraea eponina**Acraea lylia**Acraea lycoa**Acraea natalica pseudogina**Acraea penelope translucida***Family: NYMPHALIDAE***Ariadne enotrea**Bebearia theognis**Charaxes anticlea**Charaxes etheocles**Charaxes eupale**Charaxes fluvescens**Charaxes pleione**Charaxes protoclea**Euphaedra losinga**Hypolimnas misippus**Junonia pelarga**Neptis morosa*

Drury, 1773 (DW276 – 10/81)

Fabricius, 1775 (DW090 – 10/80)

Boisduval, 1836 (DW235 – 8/81)

Subfamily: Danainae

Linnaeus, 1758 (DW088 – 10/80)

Fabricius, 1793 (DW089 – 10/80)

Subfamily: Acraeinae

Linnaeus, 1758 (DW275 – 10/81)

Cramer, 1780 (DW087 – 10/80)

Fabricius, 1775 (DW284 – 10/81)

Godart, 1819 (DW234 – 8/81)

Westwood, 1852 (DW085 – 10/80)

Eltringham, (1896) (DW086 – 10/80)

Subfamily: Nymphalinae

Cramer, 1779 (DW094 – 10/80)

Hewitson, 1864 (DW280 – 10/81)

Drury, 1782 (DW284 – 10/81)

Cramer, 1777 (DW285, 286 – 10/81)

Drury, 1782 (DW282, 283 – 10/81)

Aurivillius, 1891 (DW185, 186 – 3/81)

Godart, 1824 (DW281 – 10/81)

Feisthamel, 1850 (DW184 – 3/81)

Hewitson, 1864 (DW277, 278 – 10/81)

Linnaeus, 1764 (DW093 – 10/80)

Fabricius, 1775 (DW287 – 10/81) dsf

Overlaet, 1955 (DW279 – 10/81)

Table 2. Butterflies Recorded at Ilaro, 1980 – 1981

Family: PAPILIONIDAE*Graphium leonidas**Papilio bromius***Subfamily: Papilioninae**

Fabricius, 1793 (DW196 – 4/81)

Doubleday, 1845 (DW197 – 4/81)

Family: PIERIDAE*Appias sylvia**Colotis evippe**Nepheronia argia***Subfamily: Pierinae**

Fabricius, 1775 (DW148 – 1/81)

Linnaeus, 1758 (DW146, 147 – 1/81)

Fabricius, 1775 (DW149 – 1/81)

Nepheronia thalassina

Boisduval, 1836 (DW060 – 9/80)

Family: NYMPHALIDAE

Subfamily: Danainae

Amauris niavius

Linnaeus, 1758 (DW144 – 1/81)

Amauris tartarea

Mabille, 1876 (DW143 – 1/81)

Family: NYMPHALIDAE

Subfamily: Acraeinae

Acraea bonasia

Fabricius, 1775 (DW140 – 1/81)

Acraea eponina

Cramer, 1780 (DW141 – 1/81)

Acraea lycoa

Godart, 1819 (DW227 – 8/81)

Bematistes epaea

Cramer, 1779 (DW228 – 8/81)

Bematistes tellus

Aurivillius, 1893 (DW142 – 8/81)

Family: NYMPHALIDAE

Subfamily: Nymphalinae

Antanartia delius

Drury, 1782 (DW153 – 1/81)

Aterica gallene

Bown, 1776 (DW063, 067, 068 – 9/80)

Bebearia absolon

Fabricius, 1793 (DW064, 156 – 9/80, 1/81)

Bebearia tentyrus

Hewitson, 1866 (DW157 – 1/81)

Charaxes brutus

Cramer, 1779 (DW231 – 8/81)

Euphaedra losinga

Hewitson, 1864 (DW183 – 3/81)

Euphaedra xypete

Hewitson, 1865 (DW065 – 9/80)

Euryphene simplex

Staudinger, 1891 (DW069 – 9/80)

Euyphura chalcis

Felder, 1860 (DW198 – 4/81)

Euryphura ochracea

Bartel, 1905 (DW232 – 8/81)

Hypolimnas dubius

Palisot de Beauvois, 1806 (DW062, 152 – 9/80, 1/81)

Junonia pelarga

Fabricius, 1775 (DW155 – 1/81)

Neptis alta

Overlaet, 1955 (DW066 – 9/80)

Neptis intermedia

Schultze, 1917 (DW061 – 9/80)

Phalanta phalantha aethiopica

Rothschild & Jordan (1773) (DW070 – 9/80)

Pseudacraea semire

Cramer, 1779 (DW182 – 3/81)

Pseudoneptis ianthe

Snellen, 1882 (DW154 – 1/81)

Family: NYMPHALIDAE

Subfamily: Satyrinae

Bicyclus sylvicolus

Condamin, 1965 (DW229 – 8/81)

Family: LYCAENIDAE

Oxylides faunus

Drury, 1773 (DW155 – 1/81)

Telipna acraea

Hewitson, 1851 (DW230 – 8/81)

Family: HESPERIDAE

Tagiades flesus

Fabricius, 1781 (DW150 – 1/81)

Table 3. Butterflies Recorded at Olokemeji, 1980 – 1981

Family: PAPILIONIDAE

Graphium adamastor
Graphium leonidas
Papilio bromius
Papilio dardanus
Papilio menesthus
Papilio nireus

Subfamily: Papilioninae

Boisduval, 1836 (DW097 – 12/80)
 Fabricius, 1793 (DW029 – 3/80)
 Doubleday, 1845 (DW249 – 8/81)
 Bown, 1776 (DW250 – 8/81)
 Drury, 1773 (DW098 – 12/80)
 Linnaeus, 1758 (DW248 – 8/81) & (DW585, 586 – 5/89— two specimens recorded in May 1989)

Family: PIERIDAE

Appias sylvia
Dixeia capricornus
Dixeia cebron
Eurema hecabe

Subfamily: Pierinae

Fabricius, 1775 (DW027 – 3/80)
 Ward, 1871 (DW106 – 12/80)
 Ward, 1871 (DW105 – 12/80)
 Linnaeus, 1758 (DW104 – 12/80)

Family: NYMPHALIDAE

Amauris niavius

Subfamily: Danainae

Linnaeus, 1758 (DW102, 103 – 12/80)

Family: NYMPHALIDAE

Acraea alciope
Acraea lycoa
Acraea peneleos

Subfamily: Acracinae

Hewitson, 1852 (DW100, 101 – 12/80)
 Godart, 1819 (DW251 – 8/81)
 Ward, 1871 (DW252 – 8/81)

Family: NYMPHALIDAE

Ariadne enotrea
Bebearia theognis
Charaxes anticlea
Charaxes brutus
Charaxes cynthia
Charaxes eupale
Charaxes protoclea
Charaxes tiridates
Euphaedra edwardsii
Euphaedra harpalyce
Euphaedra medon
Euphaedra ravola
Euphaedra themis
Euriphene ampedusa

Subfamily: Nymphalinae

Cramer, 1779 (DW108 – 12/80)
 Hewitson, 1864 (DW242 – 8/81)
 Drury, 1872 (DW238 – 8/81)
 Cramer, 1779 (DW236 – 8/81)
 Butler, 1865 (DW239, 240 – 8/81)
 Drury, 1782 (DW237 – 8/81)
 Feisthamel, 1850 (DW256, 257 – 8/81)
 Cramer, 1777 (DW241 – 8/81)
 van der Hoeven, 1845 (DW244 – 8/81)
 Cramer, 1777 (DW111 – 12/80)
 Linnaeus, 1763 (DW107, 245 – 12/80, 8/81)
 Hewitson, 1866 (DW246, 247, 254 – 8/81)
 Hubner, 1806 (DW112, 243 – 12/80, 8/81)
 Hewitson, 1866 (DW255 – 8/81)

<i>Hamamumida daedalus</i>	Fabricius, 1775 (DW109 – 12/80)
<i>Hypolimnias salmactis</i>	Drury, 1773 (DW253 – 8/81)
<i>Mesoxantha ethosea</i>	Drury, 1770 (DW114 – 12/80)
<i>Phalanta eurytis</i>	Doubleday, 1847 (DW110 – 12/80)
<i>Psuedacraea lucretia</i>	Cramer, 1775 (DW113 – 12/80)
<i>Salamis cacti</i>	Fabricius, 1793 (DW030 – 3/80)

Family: HESPERIDAE

<i>Pyrrochalcia iphis</i>	(DW028 – 3/80)
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