

Short Communication

A new addition of bright babul blue - *Azanus ubaldus* - stoll, 1782 (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) for Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

The Bright Babul Blue, scientifically known as *Azanus ubaldus* (Stoll, 1782), has been observed for the first time in the Premtoli Social Forestation Area (N 24.387555, E 88.404246), Godagari Upazila, Rajshahi district, Bangladesh. This finding adds to our understanding of the butterfly's distribution and underscores the importance of conserving the unique biodiversity within the Premtoli Social Forestation Area.

Introduction

Bangladesh has a diverse and abundant butterfly fauna due to its tropical climate (Chowdhury and Hossain, 2013; Larsen, 2004). Edition 7 of the IUCN (2015) Red List for Bangladesh documented 305 butterfly species spanning 10 families. The recent identification of *Azanus ubaldus* (Stoll, 1782) belonging to the Lycaenidae family adds to the country's diverse butterfly records. On November 25th, 2022, a momentous discovery was made, recording the first sighting of the butterfly species at the Premtoli Social Forestation Area in Godagari Upazila, Rajshahi district, Bangladesh (N 24.387555, E 88.404246).

Bangladesh's diverse biogeography and abundant biodiversity make it a haven for butterflies, boasting remarkable species richness. Preserving their natural habitats is vital to protecting the country's ecological treasure. Godagari Upazila, situated in Rajshahi district, covers an area of approximately 472.13 square kilometers. It is geographically located between 24°21' and 24°36'

north latitudes and between 88°17' and 88°33' east longitudes. This region's unique location and diverse geography contribute to its ecological significance and provide an ideal habitat for various plant and animal species, including the recently recorded butterfly species, *Azanus ubaldus*, from (N 24.387555, E 88.404246) (Fig. 1).

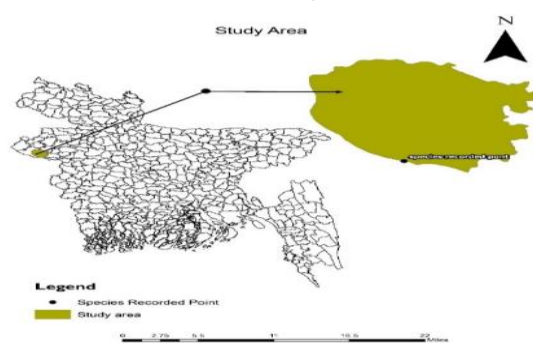


Fig. 1. Map of the study area

The Bright Babul Blue can be found in open, sunny habitats such as grasslands, scrublands, and coastal dunes. Its flight path is often irregular, and it is often seen darting between low-lying foliage and flowers (Fig. 2).

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Fig. 2. Habitat of *Azonus ubaldus* (Stoll, 1782)

The study spanned three days, from November 23 to November 25, 2022. During this period, butterflies were systematically observed and documented, adhering to the prescribed methodologies outlined by Pollard (1977), Pollard and Yates (1993). Observations were conducted in the morning between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The identification of butterflies was primarily done through direct observation, and photo evidence was captured using a Nikon d7100 camera equipped with a 70–300 mm lens.

Members of the genus *Azonus*, belonging to the family Lycaenidae, are exceptionally rare in Bangladesh. Until the recent discovery, *Azonus ubaldus* (Stoll, 1782) had not been mentioned in any published literature or identified from collected preserved specimens in Bangladesh. However, on November 25th, 2022, at 12:40 pm +06 GMT, a significant event occurred as a single individual of *Azonus ubaldus* was first recorded in the Premtoli Social Forestation Area, located in Godagari Upazila, Rajshahi district, Bangladesh (N 24.387555, E 88.404246). This observation marks the first confirmed record of the species in the country's butterfly fauna and contributes to our understanding of the butterfly diversity in the region.

Azonus ubaldus has a modest wingspan of 25 to 30 mm, with rounded wings, a curled outer edge, and a long, slender tail protruding from the hindwing. Prominent white markings and a rare blueish-grey color can be seen on the wings (Kehimkar, 2016). The butterfly's venation follows the typical Lycaenidae family pattern, containing a prominent subcostal vein perpendicular to the costa and a brief discal cell. The butterfly's long, slender, black-tipped antennae with a white base are equipped with tiny, hair-like structures that resemble setae in males (Fig. 3).

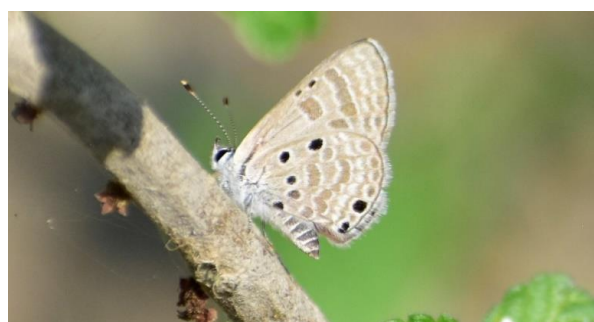


Fig. 3. *Azonus ubaldus* (Stoll, 1782)

The type is from India, but the species is also widespread in Arabia and Africa (Larsen, 2004).

The discovery of the *Azonus ubaldus* (Stoll, 1782) butterfly underscores the importance of conservation efforts in Bangladesh, a country abundant in diverse flora and fauna. Despite its biodiversity, many species in Bangladesh remain unidentified or need further study. This finding of a new butterfly species adds to the growing list of discoveries in the country, emphasizing the necessity for increased attention and protection of its unique natural heritage.

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