

RARE BUTTERFLY PALMKING SPOTTED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TAMIL NADU

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

Beauty on Wings: The rare butterfly species, Palmking, recorded in Tamil Nadu for the first time | Photo Credit: Dinesh Kumar

For the members of the Rhopalocera and Odonata Association of Rajapalayam (ROAR), Sunday outing to Coutrallam in Tenkasi district, proved lucky as three of them sighted the rare butterfly Palmking — for the first time in Tamil Nadu.

ROAR members Rakul Chandru, Dinesh Kumar and Manoj Prabhakaran went trekking into one of the reserve forest areas by the waterfalls when they spotted the butterfly resting on a palm leaf. It is the first recorded instance of the rare species in the State.

Thiruvananthapuram-based butterfly expert, Kalesh Sadasivan, told *TheHindu* that Palmking was first recorded in South India by British scientist H.S.Ferguson in 1891. More than a Century later, it was rediscovered in 2007 in Thenmala by C. Susanth and a year later lepidopterists George Mathews and Unnikrishnan P.. studied the life-stages of the Palmking and photographically documented it for the first time.

Subsequently several sightings were recorded in the forests of Arippa, Shendurney, Periyar Tiger Reserve in the south of Western Ghats.

Dr.Sadasivan said the Palmking (*Amathusia phidippus*) is a significant addition to Tamil Nadu's checklist of butterfly species.

The butterfly is characterised by its brown colour and dark bands and is described as reclusive, mostly resting in the shade. "It is not easy to spot a Palmking because its wood colour makes for easy camouflage and it rarely spreads its wings," said Dr.Sadasivan.

The ROAR president Sharan Venkatesh said this is the 321st species of butterfly found in Tamil Nadu among the 1,500 species in India. Palmking belongs to the Nymphalidae subfamily and feeds on palm, coconut and calamus varieties of plants. "Our members were lucky to get a close shot of the butterfly and we got it verified from old records," he added.

Last month, another rare butterfly species — the Spotted Royal — was rediscovered and recorded after a century in the Nilgiris.

[Our code of editorial values](#)

END

Downloaded from crackIAS.com

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com