

## Educational Trip Report: Visit to Dalhousie Forest division (Bhattiyat range) Sihunta, Chamba



**Date – Oct 7, 2024**

**Location:** Dalhousie Forest division, Bhattiyat range, Sihunta, Chamba, 176207, (H.P).

**Purpose:** To explore the species diversity of butterflies in Bhattiyat forest range and to understand their role in ecosystem, their habitat management, and need of conservation.

**Participants:** Trip was attended by 30 MSc 2<sup>nd</sup> year students, 2 PhD scholars and faculty members Dr. Madhu Bala, Dr. Amit Kumar.

### **Introduction**

An educational trip was organised by Central University of Himachal Pradesh in collaboration with Dalhousie forest division as a part of wildlife week celebration.



### **Lecture on human wildlife co-existence**

Lecture was delivered by Mr. Rajnish Mahajan, DFO Dalhousie. Various issues regarding wildlife like the increased interference of wildlife into human areas and factors responsible for decreasing biodiversity were discussed.



## **Larval and host plant identification**

Field examination of butterfly host plants was done and the criteria on the basis of which a butterfly selects its host plant were discussed.



### **Observation :**

#### **Section 1: Host plant identification**

We observed various plant species that act as host for butterflies. We learnt that different butterfly species lay their eggs on different host plants depending on their feeding habits and other factors.

#### **Section 2: Observing larval stages of butterfly**

1. We observed egg stages of butterflies which were normally oval and pale whitish in colour and was usually found on the abaxial surface of leaves of the host plant.



2. Pupal stage of butterfly was seen from which an adult butterfly emerges out.



### **Documentary of butterflies**

We explored the documentary of butterflies which was done by Bhattiyat Forest Range Officer and came to know that 158 butterfly species have been reported in this particular forest range.

Visit to butterfly museum



**Observation :**

1. We observed pictorial representations of various species of butterflies belonging to different genera in the butterfly museum.

**Learning outcomes:**

The educational trip provided invaluable learning experience. The main objective of the trip was to enhance our understanding of human wildlife co-existence, exploring the butterfly diversity, acknowledging the importance of butterflies in maintaining the ecosystem. This educational trip provided hands-on experience in species identification, behavioural study and ecological interactions. In addition to butterflies, the trip also provided the opportunity to understand the region's ecosystem. The threats posed by habitat fragmentation and climate change were discussed and students were encouraged to reflect on sustainable practices that can help protect local biodiversity.

**Submitted by :**

*Msc. Zoology 3<sup>rd</sup> semester*

*Department of animal sciences*