



<http://dx.doi.org/10.11646/zootaxa.4058.1.8>

<http://zoobank.org/urn:lsid:zoobank.org:pub:740C82A1-5ED2-47E7-8B69-FD5DF670F27E>

Lethe elwesi (Moore) **stat. rev.**, a distinct species, with description of a new subspecies from NW Yunnan, China (Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae, Satyrinae)

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Abstract

In this paper, the specific status of *Lethe elwesi* (Moore, 1892) **stat. rev.** is recovered and a new subspecies *L. elwesi houjiangae* Lang & Bozano **ssp. nov.** is described from NW Yunnan province, China. *Lethe plistia* Fruhstorfer, 1911 is still regarded as a subspecies of *L. jalaurida* (de Nicéville, 1880).

Key words: Satyrini, *Zophoessa*, Mts. Gao-li-gong

Introduction

Lethe (*Zophoessa*) *jalaurida* (de Nicéville, 1880) (Satyrini) was described from Jalauri pass, N.W. Himalayas, and until now the following subspecies have been recognized: the nominotypical subspecies from W. Himalayas (NW India, Nepal), *ssp. elwesi* (Moore, 1892) from E. Himalayas (Sikkim, Bhutan, SE Tibet), *ssp. nuolaensis* Huang, 2001 from Nujiang (Salween) Valley, extreme SE Tibet and *ssp. plistia* Fruhstorfer, 1911 (= *gelduba* Fruhstorfer, 1911) from W. Sichuan and N. Yunnan (Seitz, 1907; Fruhstorfer, 1911; Evans, 1912; Talbot, [1949]; D'Abrera, 1985, 1990; Bozano, 1999; Huang, 2001; Lang, [2014]).

Lang ([2014]) noticed differences between the male genitalia of *Lethe jalaurida elwesi* and *L. j. plistia* and, assuming that *L. j. elwesi* was a subspecies of *L. jalaurida*, he separated *L. j. plistia* from *L. jalaurida* and raised the former to the status of a different species. Later the authors, comparing the male genitalia morphology of different populations of *L. jalaurida*, found that it is *L. j. elwesi*, not *L. j. plistia*, in which the genitalia differ from those of *L. jalaurida*. Therefore *plistia* has to be considered, not a bona species, but a subspecies of *L. jalaurida*, while *elwesi* has to be regarded as a species different from *L. jalaurida*. Furthermore, *L. jalaurida* flies together with *elwesi* on both the west and east slopes of Mts. Gao-li-gong, NW Yunnan, and they have also been found in close areas in W. Bhutan by the second author. Their sympatric distribution provides further evidence that *L. jalaurida* and *elwesi* are specifically distinct.

Moore (1892) described *Zophoessa elwesi* as a distinct species but subsequent authors treated it as a subspecies or a geographical variation of *Lethe jalaurida* (Fruhstorfer, 1911; Evans, 1912; Talbot, [1949]; D'Abrera, 1985; Huang, 2001; Lang, [2014]). The present authors recover its original status as a bona species, viz. *L. (Zophoessa) elwesi stat. rev.*

A population of *Lethe elwesi* from NW Yunnan (Gongshan and Weixi), showing morphological differences from the nominotypical *elwesi*, is here described as a new subspecies, viz. *L. elwesi houjiangae ssp. nov.*

Material

The specimens examined in this research are deposited in the following collections: Chongqing Museum of Natural History, Beibei, Chongqing, CHINA (CMNH); Song-yun Lang's private collection, Chengdu, Sichuan, CHINA