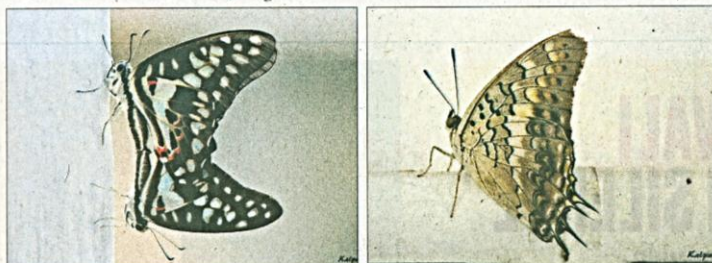


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6 THE TIMES OF INDIA, DT: 28.10.2016 PAGE NO: 6



COLOURS ALL THE WAY: Lepidopterists from Tamil Nadu Butterflies Society helped identify butterflies on the 19-acre campus of the college

It is a flyby of radiance on Stella Maris campus

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Two years ago, two professors and a few students of Stella Maris College started observing butterflies to hone their photographic skills. Today, the hobby has made way for a serious work that has taken shape in the form of a booklet enlisting the butterflies that flutter on the college campus.

Assistant professor in the zoology department Kalpana Jayaraman told TOI that two years ago she had bought a new camera and to use it better, she brought it to the college every day.

"Through the lens I observed the congregation of butterflies, their mud puddling and territorial behaviour. I read about butterflies and Krushnamegh Kunte's book 'Butterflies of Peninsular India' came in handy," Jayaraman said.

One of her students, Subhiksha Lakshmi Maxima, showed a similar interest in both butterflies and photography. The two spent Sundays photographing butterflies on the 19-acre campus and later compared the photos with those published in Isaac Kehimkar's field guide on butterflies for identification. Lepidopterists from Tamil Nadu Butterflies Society helped to identify the butterflies, Jayaraman said adding that the booklet was the outcome of suggestions made by senior colleagues.

The booklet is the only one on butterflies on the campus so far and was released on the diamond jubilee of the zoology department, said Jayaraman. "We have received support

Butterflies mate between August and November. Sightings dip once it is monsoon

FLORID FLUTTER



Family Nymphalidae | Peacock Pansy

SPOTTING IT

- > Papilionidae have swallowtails
- > Pieridae are often white and yellow
- > Nymphalidae are brush-footed
- > Lycaenidae are blue

> Hesperidae are skippers. Butterflies belonging to this family jump up and down and hence got the name of skippers

> Butterflies live for four weeks, some of them up to eight months.

Nearly 55 species of butterflies are found on Stella Maris College campus. They include: Common jay (Graphium doson), tailed jay (Graphium agamemnon), common mormon (Papilio polytes), crimson rose (Atrophaneura hector), lime butterfly (Papilio demoleus) and blue mormon (Papilio polymnestor)

> Those in the Nymphalidae family are slightly bigger than the other ones. Their life span is eight months.

Family Lycaenidae
Plains Cupid



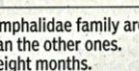
Family Pieridae
Common Jezebel



Family Papilionidae
Common Mormon and Common Jay



Family Hesperidae
Parnara Swift



from the department of biotechnology (Star College Scheme), ministry of science and technology which funded the project," she said.

Final year zoology student Lakshmi said her interest in butterflies dated to her childhood. "My professor and I would go to the campus early in the morning to record the butterflies. We would document all the species that we found," she said.

R Bhanumathi, who has authored a handbook on butterflies in Tamil, said the breeding season of the lepidopterans is between August and November.

After the arrival of the monsoon, their sightings come down. IIT, Madras, Guindy National Park and Madras Christian College are some of the campuses in the city where a variety of butterflies can be seen, she said.