

## Scientific Note

**Rediscovery of Hedge Cupid, *Bothrinia chennellii* (de Nicéville, 1884)  
(Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) to Meghalaya, Northeastern India**

Redescubrimiento de *Bothrinia chennellii* (de Nicéville, 1884) (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae)  
en Meghalaya, noreste de la India

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**Abstract.** The Hedge Cupid butterfly, *Bothrinia chennellii* (de Nicéville, 1884) (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) is rediscovered to Meghalaya, India, from two different localities since its last known records. The species was last recorded 63 years ago by Cantlie from Shillong, Khasi Hills, Meghalaya in 1952 and since then no records of this species has been found in the literature of the state. The species is legally protected under Schedule II of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. In this paper taxonomy, distribution and current habitat of the species are discussed.

**Key words:** Eastern Himalaya; Khasi Hills; Nongkhlai; wildlife conservation; Wildlife Protection Act.

**Resumen.** La mariposa *Bothrinia chennellii* (de Nicéville, 1884) (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) es redescubierta en Meghalaya, India, de dos localidades diferentes a partir de los últimos registros conocidos. La especie fue reportada por última vez hace 63 años en Cantile de Khasi Hills, Meghalaya, y desde entonces no se habían encontrado nuevos registros de esta especie en la literatura del estado. La especie está protegida legalmente bajo el Anexo II de la Ley de Protección de la Vida Silvestre de la India de 1972. En esta nota se discute la taxonomía, distribución geográfica y el hábitat que actualmente ocupa la especie.

**Palabras clave:** Conservación de la vida silvestre; Himalaya oriental; Khasi Hills; ley de protección de la vida silvestre; Nongkhlai.

*Bothrinia chennellii* was first described by de Nicéville (1884) under the genus *Cyaniris* Dalman, 1816. His description was based on two male specimens collected by Mr. A.W. Chennell from Shillong, Meghalaya, India for which it is named *chennellii* (de Nicéville 1884). In 1907, Bingham listed this species as *Cyaniris chennellii* providing the locality as Shillong, India and Northern Chin Hills in Upper Burma (Bingham 1907). Later, Chapman (1908) described a new genus named *Bothrinia* Chapman from the type specimens of

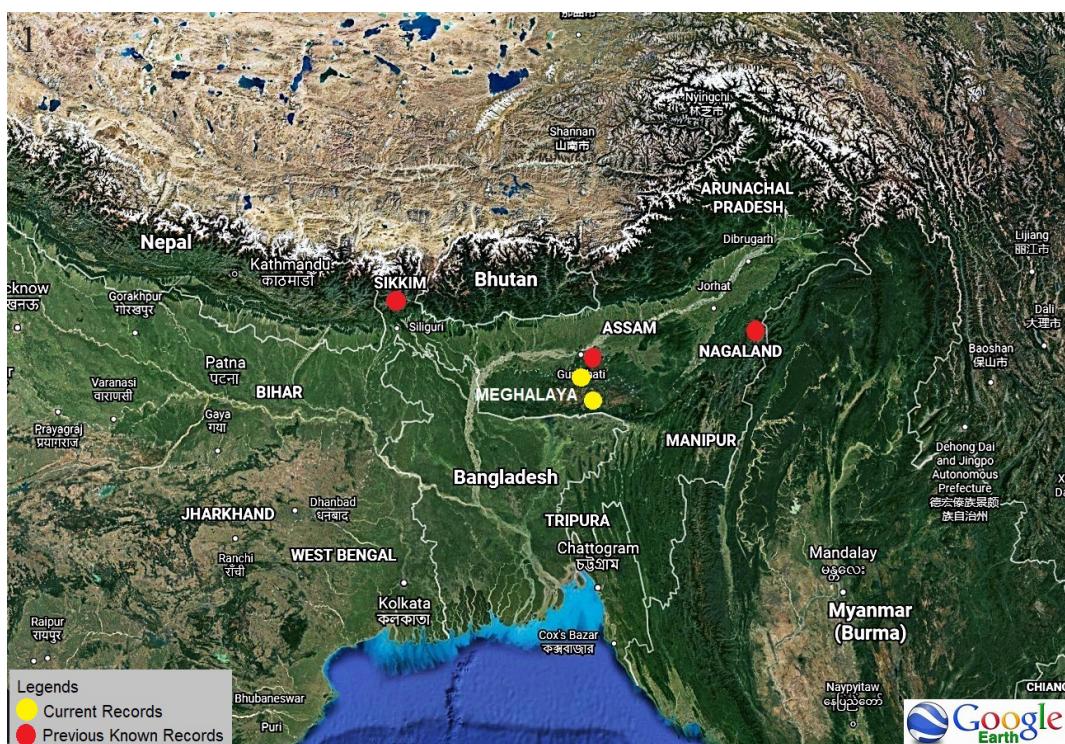
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*chennellii* (Chapman 1908, 1909). After that this species is placed under the genus *Bothrinia* Chapman, 1909. Fruhstofer (1917) mentioned this species as *Lycaenopsis chennellii* from the specimens of Naga Hills and Sikkim (Fruhstofer 1910, 1917). The species was last recorded from Meghalaya by Cantlie (1952). Recently this species was reported from Nidan and Sijitong, China (Huang 2002), Chizami, Nagaland (Naro and Sondhi 2014) and Mongar Dzongkhag, Bhutan (Poel 2020).

The authors documented various localities of Meghalaya as a part of the project taken under Meghalaya Biodiversity Board from 2015 to 2018 to study taxonomy, diversity and distribution of butterflies of the state. During preliminary surveys at Nongkhylliem Wildlife Sanctuary, Ri-Bhoi District ( $25^{\circ}45'22''$  N and  $91^{\circ}45'84''$  E) on 18.xi.2015 and at Pongtung Bridge, East Khasi Hills ( $25^{\circ}15'5.4''$  N and  $91^{\circ}57'3.8''$  E) on 15.xii.2015, we sighted *B. chennellii* at both locations (Figs. 1, 3). While searching the literature for records of this species we realized that it had not been reported in the state in approximately 63 years since its last known record (Cantlie 1952). We also observed that apart from our current record, only a single record of this species from Czami, Nagaland, India is available in the recent published literature (Naro and Sondhi 2014). There is no present information on the habitat or population of this rare butterfly. The present sighting is very significant as this species is listed under Schedule II of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (Anonymous 1997).



**Figure 1.** Previous and current records of *Bothrinia chennellii* in India. / *Registros anteriores y actuales de Bothrinia chennellii en India.*

*Bothrinia chennellii* (Fig. 2) is very similar to the species under the genera *Celastrina* Tutt, 1906, and *Udara* Taxopeus, 1928, but can be distinguished from the following characters according to de Nicéville (1884) and Evans (1932):

**Bothrinia chennellii:** Under forewing discal spots 1b-5 in line (out of line in *Celastrina* and *Udara*). Under forewing discal spot in 6 only slightly shifted in (very shifted in *Celastrina* and *Udara*). The forewing cilia is chequered in *Celastrina* and *Udara* unlike *B. chennellii*. Moreover, in *Udara*, the costal margin is edged with dark spots unlike *B. chennellii*.



**Figure 2.** Current sightings of *B. chennellii* in Meghalaya, India: (a). Nongkhlai Wildlife Sanctuary, Ri-Bhoi District. (b). Pongtung Bridge, East Khasi Hills. / Avistamientos actuales de *B. chennellii* en Meghalaya, India: (a). Santuario de vida silvestre de Nongkhlai, distrito de Ri-Bhoi. (B). Puente Pongtung, este de Khasi Hills.



**Figure 3.** One of the few last refuges of *B. chennellii* in India. (a). Nongkhlai Wildlife Sanctuary, Ri-Bhoi District; (b). Fragmented hill forest below Pongtung Bridge, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya. / Uno de los últimos refugios de *B. chennellii* en India. (a). Santuario de vida silvestre de Nongkhlai, distrito de Ri-Bhoi; (B). Bosque de montaña fragmentado debajo del puente Pongtung, este de Khasi Hills, Meghalaya.

We hope that information on the current sightings will promote interest in the ecology and conservation of *B. chennellii*. Further studies to delineate its population and current distribution will help to map the existence of this species in the remnant forests of Northeast India. Based on our current sightings, we suggest that the species can be seen in the small forest fragments and protected areas of the state. Legal protection of the remnant forest may help to connect and protect populations of *B. chennellii* and other scheduled butterfly species.

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