



## Some new records of moth from Andaman and Nicobar Islands

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### INTRODUCTION

Moths are often regarded as less engaging but with their diversity of shapes, sizes and colors they are as fascinating as butterflies. Though moths are much common than butterflies, people always refer to butterflies when speaking about Lepidoptera. In fact 95 per cent of all Lepidoptera are moths. Biologists estimate that worldwide there are about 1,70,000 species of butterflies and moths, of which approximately 18,000 belong to butterfly species and rest are moths. There are about 1,50,000 to 2,50,000 species of moth, with thousands of species yet to be described. Most species of moth are nocturnal, but there are crepuscular and diurnal species. It is estimated that approximately 10,000 species of moths are to be found in India belongs to 41 families.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands is known for rich biodiversity resources. The archipelago comprises 572 islands and extending over 800 km. The Andaman Islands are the extension of the submerged Arakan Yoma Mountain range of Myanmar and the Nicobars are the continuation of the Mentawai Islands to the south and southeast of Sumatra. The topography of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are hilly and undulating, the elevation in Andamans is from 0 to 732 m and Saddle Peak is the highest in North Andaman Island. In the Nicobars the elevation rises from 0 to 568 m, Mt Thuillier being the highest peak in Great Nicobar Island. The habitats represented in these islands include bays, mangroves, moist deciduous forests and evergreen forests. These islands are tropical, that is, warm, moist and equable. The proximity of the sea and the abundant rainfall prevent extremes of heat. The mountainous parts of the southern group of islands get about 300 cm of rain annually whereas the islands of north get lesser rainfall. Flora and fauna in Andaman bears close biogeographical affinities with Myanmar and Thailand while Nicobar has affinities with Indo-Mayan regions.

During the recent faunal surveys in Great Nicobar Island in Nicobar and Neil Island in South Andaman, we have collected two species of moths namely *Ophiusa coronata* Fabricius 1794 and *Anisodes absconditaria* Walker 1862 respectively, which is the first report of *Ophiusa coronata*

from Nicobar Group of Islands and *Anisodes absconditaria* is from Andaman and Nicobar islands. Literature review revealed that earlier workers have not been reported the *Ophiusa coronata* Fabricius 1794 from Nicobar Islands and *Anisodes absconditaria* Walker 1862 from Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Bhummanawar et al., 1991; Chandra and Kumar, 1992; Chandra and Rajan, 1995 and Chandra, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997). The identified materials are deposited in the National Zoological Collection, at Zoological Survey of India, Andaman and Nicobar Regional Centre, Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

### SYSTEMATIC ACCOUNT

#### 1. *Ophiusa coronata* Fabricius 1794

Order : Lepidoptera

Family : Noctuidae

Species : *Ophiusa coronata* Fabricius 1794

1894 *Ophiusa coronata* Fabricius, Fauna Brit. India, Moths - II: 502p.

1985 *Ophiusa coronata* Fabricius, Heterocera sumatrana, Vol. 4: 36p.

**Material examined.** 1ex, Male; Place of collection: East-West Road, GNBR (06° 59.825' N; 93° 54.608' E); Date of collection: 27.02.2010; Collected by C. Sivaperuman and party at light (Reg. No. 2396).

**Wing expanse.** 72 mm.

**Diagnosis.** Head and thorax are deep pale russet brown. Abdomen bright yellow, the dorsal segments are fringed with black bands. Forewing deep reddish brown patterned with dark specks and an outward oblique antemedial line and inward post medial line, a reniform large chocolate spot. Hind wing orange yellow patterned with brownish black bands. The legs are deep brown and hairy.

**Distribution.** Throughout India, Sri Lanka, Burma, Java, Australia and Andaman Islands.

#### 2. *Anisodes absconditaria* Walker 1862

Order : Lepidoptera

Family : Geometridae

Species : *Anisodes absconditaria* Walker 1862

1894 *Ophiusa coronata* Fabricius, Fauna Brit. India, Moths - II: 502p.

**Material examined.** 1ex, Male; Place of collection: Neil Island, South Andaman (11° 50.120' N; 93° 01.402' E); Date of collection: 22.03.2010; Collected by C. Sivaperuman and party at light (Reg. No. 2399).

**Wing expanse.** 38 mm.

**Diagnosis.** It is medium size, head and thorax pale in colour. Wings mosaic with fine reddish brown. Forewing with two distinct waved postmedial lines. Hind wings are similar with large black diffused speck. Under side of the forewing suffused with pink.

**Distribution.** South India, Nilgiris, Sri Lanka, Khasis hills

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