Butterfly Photos of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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version 29 March 2009

Contents

Introduction

This compendium presents selected photographs I have taken of butterfly species from Democratic Republic of the Congo, Africa.

The photos were taken in Salonga National Park; immediately adjacent to the park around the village of Monkoto and in the inhabited "corridor" strip that separates the North Block and the South Block of Salonga National Park; in various villages and forests bordering the Congo River from Mbandaka south to Lac Tumba and Bikoro and Botuali; and up the Ubange River to the villages of Mobenzino, Eden, and Bobangi.

Photos were taken in and adjacent to villages and settlements, in disturbed secondary *terra firma* forest, and in primary flooded forest.

Entries are listed in alphabetical order by family, subfamily, genus, and species. In a few cases, the same photo appears on different pages because the photo contains more than one species. Rather than cropping such photos down to show only one species of interest, it is important to show the multiple-species groups.

I have formatted much of this booklet in landscape width to better facilitate viewing on computer screens.

Also please see Acknowledgments for special thanks to the lepidopterist who greatly aided in species identification and information, and others who provided field access and guidance.

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Family: Lycaenidae Subfamily: Polyommatinae

Azanus (prob. *A. mirza*)

Azanus sp., probably *A. mirza*, is the small white butterfly in these photos.

This species is identified by its small size, white matrix color, and dark spots.

In this group at a bare-soil "mineral lick," the larger white species are *Appias sabina* and *Phlyaria cyara*, and the orange-colored species is *Uranothauma falkensteinii*.

Family: Lycaenidae Subfamily: Polyommatinae

Phylaria cyara

Phylaria cyara is the large white butterfly in the photo below.

This species is identified by its large size, white underside, trace of yellow, and 2 or 3 black spots.

Family: Lycaenidae Subfamily: Polyommatinae

Pseudonacaduba aethiops

This small, dark species is quite common in forests, especially on muddy roads and along river banks.

Family: Lycaenidae Subfamily: Polyommatinae

Uranothauma falkensteinii

This species is a somewhat small butterfly, characterized by a copper-brown upperwing with contrasting underwing of black and white markings.
It is a forest species that wanders into riverine environments. It is typical of the African equatorial forest belt.
Males often come to mudpuddles and paths. The female is less common than the male.
The photo on the right shows it in association with *Appias Sabina, Azanus* (prob. *A. mirza*), and *Phlyaria cyara* on a bare-soil mineral lick.

Family: Nymphalidae Subfamily: Heliconiinae

Acraea cepheus

Shown here is the male.

This is a seasonal forest butterfly that can be extremely abundant, but only at times.

Family: Nymphalidae Subfamily: Heliconiinae

Acraea egina

This forest species serves as a model for very good mimic species in other families, and thus is likely highly unpalatable. The photo on the right shows it association with *Acraea lycoa*.

Photos taken in Bobangi village along the Ubangi River.

Family: Nymphalidae Subfamily: Heliconiinae

Acraea lycoa

This is a forest species.

Photos taken in Bobangi village along the Ubangi River.

Family: Nymphalidae Subfamily: Heliconiinae

Lachnoptera anticlia



This species used to be in the subfamily Nymphalinae, and then Argynninae, but recent DNA studies have shown that this genus and *Phalantha*, as well as all Acraeinae, belong to the American subfamily Heliconiinae.

Family: Nymphalidae Subfamily: Heliconiinae

Phalantha (prob. *P. eurytis*)

This is genus *Phalantha*, probably species *P. eurytis* (the more "forested" species, where this was photographed in a forest clearing within Salonga National Park). *P. eurytis*, however, is very similar to *P. phalantha*, and is quite tolerant and widespread, the only difference between the two species lies in one black dot somewhere on the upperwing.

These are quite common forest species – sometimes abundant -- and are very tolerant of habitat disturbance, openings, clearings, river channels, etc.

I photographed this one likely licking salt evaporating from my pants on an outdoor clothesline.

Family: Nymphalidae Subfamily: Limenitinae

Bebearia (prob. the group *B. tentyris*)

This butterfly belongs to genus *Bebearia*, probably the species group *B. tentyris*, but the underside must been seen to positively identify the species. There are 6 to 10 species in this complex, and males are easier to identify than are the very difficult females. The group exhibits great sexual dimorphism. Males are a dark reddish-brown, smaller, forest-floor dwelling butterfly.

The *B. tentyris* species group is divided in two; one group has 3 species where the females are in fact almost impossible to identify to species. Beyond this species group, there are about 100 species of *Bebearia* in Africa.

Family: Nymphalidae Subfamily: Limenitinae

Catuna angustata

Males and females of this species look very much alike.

There are 5 species of *Catuna* in Africa. These species, and others of the subfamily Limenitinae, are associated with the forest floor and occupy a niche that are almost strictly related to the floor of the forest interior.

Of subfamily Limenitinae, there are many species (a bit under 500), and many genera such as *Euphaedra, Euriphene, Bebearia, Catuna,* and *Euryphura*, and a few monotypical genera.

Serious taxonomic studies and revisions are needed on these genera.

Family: Nymphalidae Subfamily: Limenitinae

Harma theobene



In some taxonomies, this species belongs to *Cymothoe theobene*, although in the most recent literature this species still belongs to the genus *Harma*.

This is a quite common species of the forest, especially in openings and small clearing.

Family: Nymphalidae Subfamily: Limenitinae

Sevenia occidentalium

This is a common forest species. Males love mudpuddles.
It is related to the American genera *Eunica* and *Sallya.*

Family: Nymphalidae Subfamily: Nymphalinae

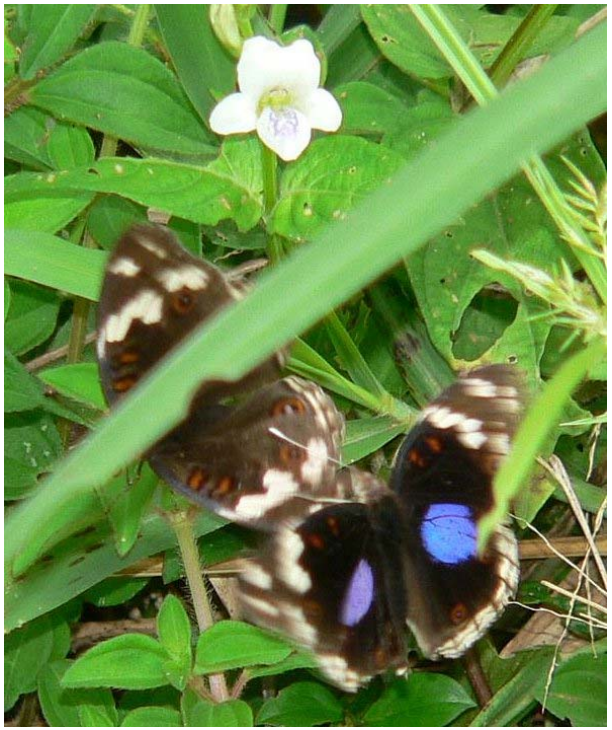
Hypolimnas anthedon

This species (although appearing very different) is closely related to *Junonia oenone*. They share the same subfamily and more or less the same habitats and same larval food plants.

This species is also found in degraded habitats, woodlands, and villages. It will penetrate more into primary forest than will *Junonia oenone*, and tends to occur higher above the ground.

Family: Nymphalidae Subfamily: Nymphalinae

Junonia oenone



Show on the left photo are male (with blue spots) and female. The male in this photo is likely chasing the female, because the plant they are on (with the white flower) is an *Asystasia*, probably *A. gangetica*, which happens to be one of the many host plants of the species.

This is typically a species of the forest edge and savanna. It is very common in all savanna types, and also penetrates deep forest along big roads and villages. I photographed this species along the edge of a grass landing airstrip, a typical locale for this species, along with other grassy areas around villages and roads.

Family: Nymphalidae Subfamily: Nymphalinae

Precis sp.

This belongs to genus *Precis* but the species is uncertain, and told by markings on the upperwing.

Family: Papilionidae Subfamily: Papilioninae

Graphium antheus

In this riot of blue are actually three species of genus *Graphium*. *G. antheus* is the one with the forewing cell shaped as an "S." These are all common in heavy vegetation and are found all over Africa.

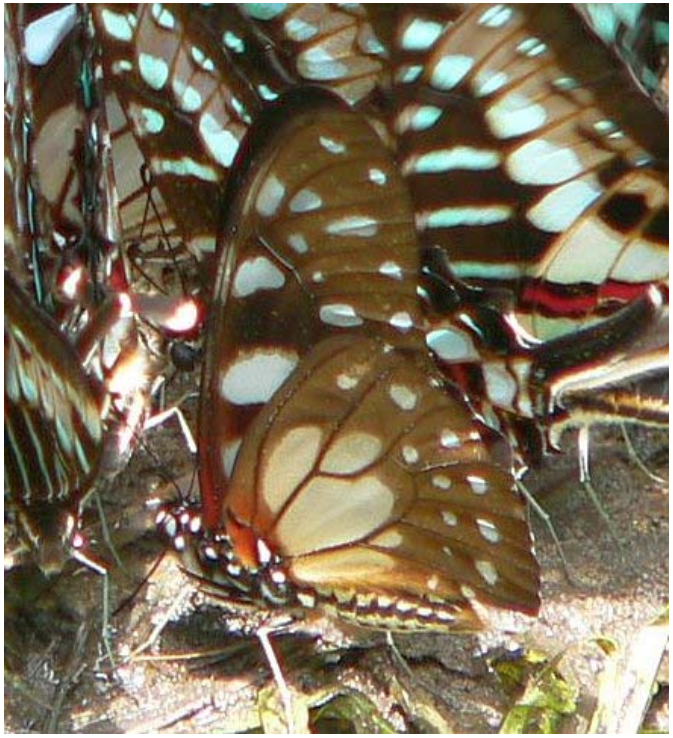
Family: Papilionidae Subfamily: Papilioninae

Graphium hachei

The lone brown-colored butterfly is *Graphium hachei*, mixing in with several white members of *Belenois calypso*.

Family: Papilionidae Subfamily: Papilioninae

Graphium leonidas



On the left is a lone *Graphium leonidas*, in a swirl of mostly *G. policenes* and a *G. antheus*.

This species is told by its lack of a swallowtail, and is more black and bluish-white.
All three of these species occupy dense vegetation and are found all over Africa.

Family: Papilionidae Subfamily: Papilioninae

Graphium policenes

This species (the common swordtail or small striped swordtail) is the most common of the *Graphium* complex, and is the most abundant in this three-species group. It has green markings in the forewing cell straight.

Family: Pieridae Subfamily: Coliadinae

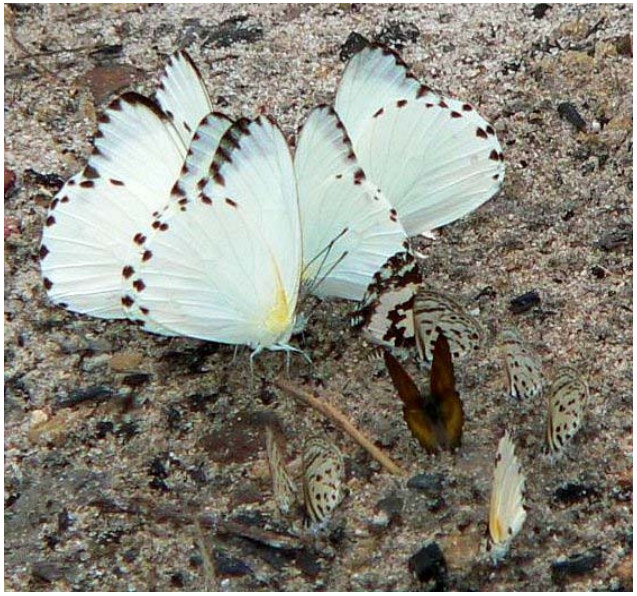
Eurema hecabe or *E. floricola*

The difference between *Eurema hecabe* and *E. floricola* lies in the black apical zone, that has its largest width at vein 4 for *E. hecabe* and at vein 5 for *E. floricola*. This photo may be of *E. floricola* but identification is unclear.

Either way, both species have a large distribution and almost certainly both occur in Salonga National Park in central Democratic Republic of the Congo, where this photo was taken.

Family: Pieridae Subfamily: Pierinae

Appias sabina



These are large white butterflies apparently common to forest openings.

They were attracted to this bare mineral soil salt lick and associated with *Azanus* sp. (prob. *A. mirza*), *Uranothauma falkensteinii*, and *Phlyaria cyara*.

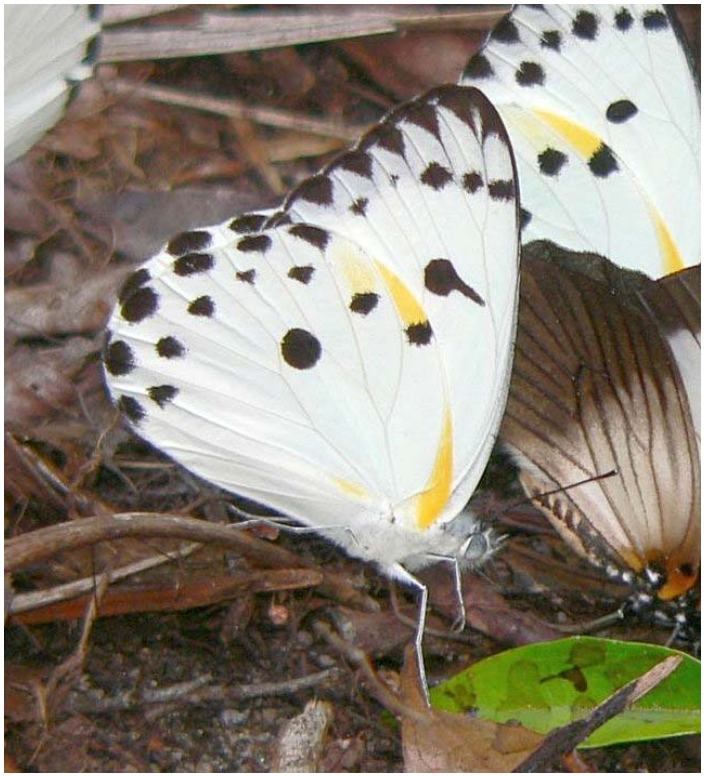
Family: Pieridae Subfamily: Pierinae

Appias sp.

The small white butterflies in the foreground are a species of *Appias*.

Family: Pieridae Subfamily: Pierinae

Belenois calypso



The large white butterflies here is *Belenois calypso*, a locally common species.

It is associated on this bare mineral soil salt lick with *Graphium policenes* and *Appias* sp.

Family: Pieridae Subfamily: Pierinae

Belenois sudanensis

This species is closely related to *Belenois calypso*. The species overlap in distribution and look alike. In general, species of the genus *Belenois* are not really associated with deep rainforest, and are found around the great forest belt of Africa. They occur in south, east, and north Congo. If they penetrate deep forest it may be along savanna inclusions or in areas of human habitation. In Gabon, the genus is only marginally present in the south and is replaced by two other species in the ancient forests. All *Belenois* caterpillars feed on Capparaceae plants of genus *Capparis, Maerua,* and *Boscia* in savannas, and *Ritcheia* in forests.

Acknowledgments

My sincere thanks to Gaël Vande weghe for identifications and information on ecology and forest associations of these species. I greatly appreciate the wonderful help and information

My 2004 and 2006 expeditions to the Congo, during which I took the photographs in this report, were conducted under auspices of the International Programs office of USDA Forest Service, Washington D.C. I greatly appreciate Forest Service guidance from Michael Chaveas, and field expedition colleagues Rick Alexander and John Sidle.

I also appreciate Michael Brown, George Akwah, and Alfa of Innovative Resource Management, and Lisa Steel and Omari Ilambu of World Wide fund for Wildlife for their hosting me in the field.

Any errors in this report remain my own, and I would appreciate being contacted with corrections or additions.