

history. *E. singhala* restricted to undisturbed forest patches of *Caryota urens*, *Calamus rotang* and *Calamus zeylanicus* in wet zone highland but the absence of the species after extensive survey in similar habitats reveal that *E. singhala* is more local. *E. singhala* is rather shy butterfly inhabits dark dense forests which feeds on over-ripped fruits etc.. *E. singhala* often fly as couple and individual female can be seen hovering host plants. *E. hypermnestra* female always flies individually and less abundant than its male. *E. hypermnestra* males pare have a 'dance' or 'fight' possibly for territory. Perhaps pare of males share the same territory because both chase other butterflies together and that 'couple dance' never aggressive. Immediate conservation actions such as habitat restoration and transplanting should be tested for *E. singhala*.

**Keywords:** Ceylon Palmfly, endemic, host plants, mimicry, habitat, territory

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#### Ecto and intestinal parasites of wild dwelling *Rattus rattus* in Sri Lanka

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Parasites and infectious diseases have become a major concern in conservation biology, in part because they can trigger or accelerate species or population decline. Also, in particular rodents are responsible for transmission of helminth infections to humans and domestic animals globally. *Rattus rattus* is a cosmopolitan species which in Sri Lanka occupies both domestic and wild habitats. Nevertheless, studies on the intestinal and ectoparasites associated with this species in Sri Lanka is scarce.

Investigation of ecto and intestinal parasites of *R. rattus* were carried out in several rainforests (Sinharaja, Kanneliya, Masimbula, Yagirala, Walanaknda) in Sri Lanka during October 2006 to August 2007. Animals were live trapped using Sherman traps, baited with lightly roasted coconut kernel. Ectoparasites were searched on the body, paws and ears of each captured individual. Fur was combed with a fine brush and the parasites were picked, fixed in 70 % alcohol, mounted and were observed through a light microscope. Parasitic infestation was seen to be less prevalent in *R. rattus* with only 11 % of the individuals captured being infected. Only a single mite of the genus *Echinolaelaps* was recorded on this species, confirming previous records.

Faecal matter from trap bags and those discharged during handling were collected to carry out investigations on intestinal parasites. Strongyles type, strongyloides type, ascaris type and cestode type helminth eggs and nematode larvae were recorded for the first time in this island from rodents from Masimbula, Sinharaja, Kanneliya and Walankanda forest reserves.

Investigations of this nature would provide baseline data on parasitic associations of wild dwelling rodents that would be useful in identifying potential threats to other species as well as the management of the host species.

**Key words:** rainforest, *Rattus rattus*, ecto parasites, intestinal parasites, wild dwelling rodents

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#### Policy Challenges to Ecotourism Development in Sri Lanka

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Ecotourism is a fast growing sub-sector of international tourism, and Sri Lanka, an island endowed with rich biodiversity, has been trying to reduce its reliance on mass tourism by promoting alternative tourism. However, several years of efforts have brought insufficient increases in investment initiatives and in the demand for ecotourism products and services on the island. The objective of the study was to identify the policy challenges to ecotourism development and to propose improvements in the existing ecotourism policy, regulations and practices. Although all shareholders agree that ecotourism is a very good option for the destination, the sector suffers from lack of policy initiatives, regulations and co-ordination between stakeholders. This results in the absence of formal acceptance of the sector, limits standardisation efforts, and reduces its marketing power. The paper identifies policy challenges and proposes practical measures for policy formulation and implementation, and for positioning Sri Lanka as an ecotourism destination.