

Swallowtail moths *Lyssa zampa* mating

Subjects: Swallowtail moth, *Lyssa zampa* (Insecta: Lepidoptera: Uraniidae).

Subject identified by: Contributors.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, Taban Valley; 13 December 2008; 2015 hrs.

Habitat: Primary lowland rainforest.

Observers: Contributors and others.

Observation: Two swallowtail moths were, from the top view, seen positioned side by side with their heads facing opposite directions, and each clutching onto two leaf blades of a frond of an unidentified palm (Fig. 1). From the lateral view, the moths have the rear ends of their abdomen united, engaged in copulation. The female is the one facing up, with the distinctly larger abdomen (Fig. 2). The pair was suspended at about 2 m off the forest floor.

Remarks: While this moth species can be seasonally abundant, photographs of mating pairs appear to be rare in publications.

While the wings may be folded up like a butterfly while mating, it rests in typical moth fashion with its wings spread wide open. This attitude of rest has been described as 'very much like that of a specimen set and pinned in a collection' (Tweedie & Harrison, 1977: 137, as *Nyctalemon patroclus*).

Lyssa zampa resembles a butterfly as it has relatively smooth antenna. This species is widespread throughout the Indo-Australian region (Fox, 1986: 80).



Fig. 1. Dorsal view of pair of mating *Lyssa zampa* clinging onto leaf blades of a palm frond. Photograph by Kelvin K. P. Lim

References:

- Fox, A., 1986. *Malaysian Nature Handbooks. Common Malaysian Moths*. Longman Malaysia Sdn. Bhd., Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. ix + 105, 32 pls.
- Tweedie, M. W. F. & J. L. Harrison, 1977. *Malayan Animal Life*. Third edition, fourth impression. Longman Malaysia Sdn. Berhad, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. x + 237 pp.



Fig. 2. Side view of mating *Lyssa zampa* moths. Female on the top with swollen abdomen. Photograph by Kelvin K. P. Lim

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