

Biodiversity Record: European peacock butterfly at Toh Yi Drive

Simon Chan Kee Mun

Toh Yi Drive, Singapore 590012; Email: simonchan268@yahoo.com.sg

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Subject: European peacock, *Aglais io* (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae, Nymphalinae).

Subject identified by: Simon Chan Kee Mun.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Toh Yi Drive; 17 October 2021; 1813 hrs.

Habitat: Urban housing estate of concrete high-rise buildings. Inside an apartment unit.

Observers: Poh Choon Poo and Simon Chan Kee Mun.

Observation: On that cloudy and drizzly evening, one example with a wingspan of 55 mm flew into an apartment unit on the 10th floor, apparently to roost for the night. Its wings were worn and torn (Fig. 1).

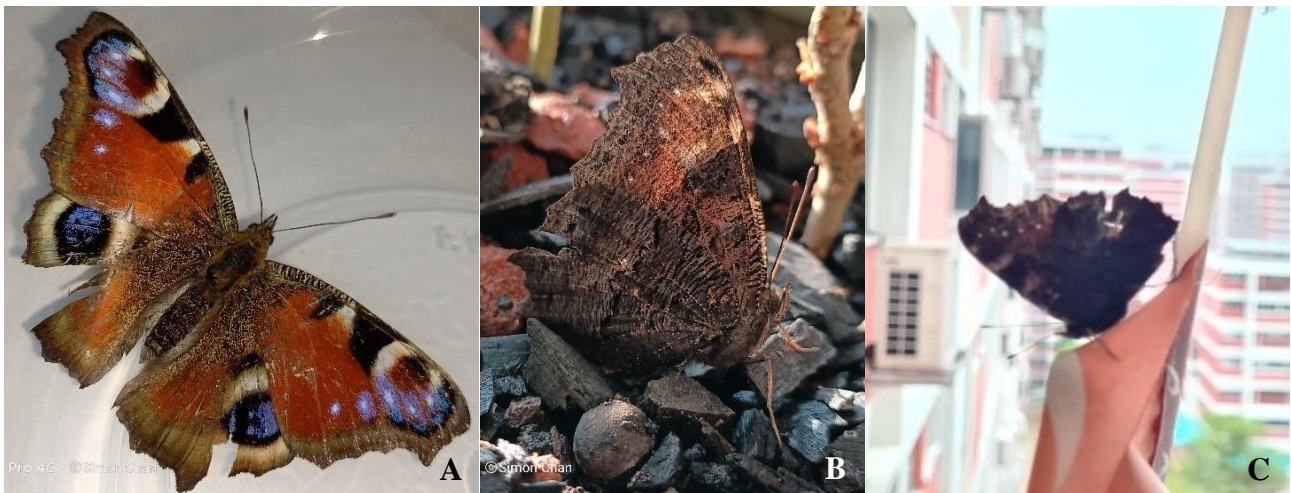


Fig. 1. European peacock butterfly at Toh Yi Drive, Singapore. A, dorsal view; B, lateral view; C, lateral view of the same individual against the urban high-rise environment where it was found. (Photographs by: Simon Chan Kee Mun).

Remarks: This is an unusual encounter in that the subject is a species native not to Singapore (see Khew, 2015) but to temperate regions. It is a common butterfly that is widespread throughout the Palaearctic, from Europe to Japan. It was introduced to North America, where the first specimen was collected in Québec, Canada, in 1997 (Nazari et al., 2018). How the featured example got into Singapore may never be known. It is plausible for the insect to have been imported accidentally in its larval or pupal stage with agricultural or horticultural products, or it could be an escapee from a private collection.

Literature cited:

Khew SK (2015) A Field Guide to the Butterflies of Singapore. 2nd Edition. Ink On Paper Communications Pte Ltd, Singapore, xxv + 375 pp.

Nazari V, Handfield L & Handfield D (2018) The European peacock butterfly, *Aglais io* (Linnaeus, 1758) in North America (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae). News of the Lepidopterists' Society, 60: 128–129.