

Biodiversity Record: Fifth Singapore record of the white club flitter butterfly

Alan OwYong^{1*}, Timothy Liew¹ & Anuj Jain^{1,2}.

¹ Nature Society (Singapore), Lorong 28 Geylang, Singapore 389466;

Email: alan.owyong@gmail.com (*corresponding author)

² bioSEA Pte Ltd, 2 Orchard Link, Singapore 237978.

Recommended citation. OwYong A, Liew T & Jain A (2022) Biodiversity Record: Fifth Singapore record of the white club flitter butterfly. Nature in Singapore, 15: e2022079. DOI: 10.26107/NIS-2022-0079

Subject: White club flitter, *Hyarotis microsticta* (Insecta: Lepidoptera: HesperIIDae).

Subject identified by: Jonathan Soong, Simon Chan and Anuj Jain.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, Freshwater Pond; 30 May 2022; 1027 hrs.

Habitat: Mixed young secondary forest surrounding a freshwater pond which forms part of a wetland habitat. Includes plants such as *Macaranga gigantea*, *Ficus* species, *Dillenia suffruticosa*, *Leea indica* and *Caryota* palms.

Observers: Timothy Liew and Alan OwYong.

Observation: The observers were standing on the wooden boardwalk by the pond when T. Liew noticed an individual of the white club flitter resting on a leaf of the fish-tail palm (*Caryota mitis*) leaf next to him at eye level. It had a wing length of about 18 mm, and the wings are not well-marked except for a few white spots on the undersides of the forewings. Both observers took turns to photograph the butterfly which stayed still for about ten minutes (Figs. 1 & 2), and remained in the same position when they left.

Remarks: *Hyarotis microsticta* was first recorded in Singapore by Chan Soon Chye based on photographs of an individual (then not identified) taken at Sungei Buloh on 30 September 2007, that were posted on his blog (Chan, 2015). This predates a female specimen photographed by Yong Yik Shih at Chek Jawa on Pulau Ubin in September 2015, that was thought to be the first Singapore record (Nature Society [Singapore], 2015). The third local record was from Pulau Ubin on 22 January 2022 by Sebastian Ow (iNaturalist, 2022a). The fourth record was from Upper Seletar Reservoir Park on 29 May 2022, which was reported by Wendy Ngeh in the ‘Butterflies of Singapore and Malaysia’ Facebook group. The featured sighting, the fifth known for Singapore, was previously uploaded on iNaturalist (iNaturalist, 2022b).

Hyarotis microsticta is widely distributed in South and Southeast Asia, from India to Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines (Wood Mason & de Niceville, 1887). Jain et al. (2018) described the species as a cryptic, non-native and vagrant species that utilizes degraded habitats in Singapore. With an increasing number of records in 2022, it is possible that the species is now a breeding resident in the country. It is highly likely that the white club flitter has spread beyond Pulau Ubin, Sungei Buloh and Upper Seletar, but its distribution in Singapore remains to be investigated further.

Literature cited:

Chan SC (2015) Description of *Hyarotis microsticta*. Butterflies of Singapore and Peninsular Malaysia blog. <http://sgbug.blogspot.sg/2015/09/the-white-club-flitter-hyarotis.html> [Accessed 25 June 2022]

iNaturalist (2022a) <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/105364069> [Accessed 25 June 2022]

iNaturalist (2022b) <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/119564281> [Accessed 25 June 2022]

Jain A, Khew SK, Gan CW & Webb EL (2018) Butterfly extirpations, discoveries and rediscoveries in Singapore over 28 years. Raffles Bulletin of Zoology, 66: 217–257.

Nature Society [Singapore] (2015) *Hyarotis microsticta* – new species of skipper found in Pulau Ubin. https://www.nss.org.sg/nss_group.aspx?news_id=u5gaSZQzywY=&group_id=D2dvAi49zO8 [Accessed 25 June 2022]

Wood-Mason J & de Nicéville CLA (1887) List of the lepidopterous insects collected in Cachar by Mr. J. Wood-Mason. Part II. Rhopalocera. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 55: 343–393.



Fig. 1. Lateral view of *Hyarotis microsticta* at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve on 30 May 2022. (Photograph by: Alan OwYong)



Fig. 2. Another image of the same butterfly (Photograph by: Timothy Liew)