

A New Species of *Cethosia* and a New Subspecies of *Delias* (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae and Pieridae) from New Ireland, Papua New Guinea

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ABSTRACT. Two butterflies *Cethosia vasalia* n.sp. (Nymphalidae) and *Delias messalina lizae* n.subsp. (Pieridae) are described and figured from mid to high montane New Ireland. *Cethosia vasalia* n.sp. and *C. obscura* Guérin-Méneville are parapatric locally within the Bismarck Archipelago. These two species and their subspecies are compared in detail.

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This paper is the second describing new butterflies from montane forests of New Ireland; geographic and locality information is given in the first (Müller & Tennent, 1999). The genus *Cethosia* Fabricius, which occurs from Sri Lanka and India, in the Andamans and Nicobars, through Southeast Asia to eastern Papua New Guinea and northern Queensland, is represented by about ten species. Parsons (1989b, 1998) provided keys to the New Guinean genera of Heliconiinae, one of which is *Cethosia*. A new species, *Cethosia vasalia* n.sp., is described here from New Ireland. It superficially resembles *C. obscura* Guérin-Méneville, which occurs generally throughout the Bismarck Archipelago and together, these species are the most melanic in the genus.

All stages of *Cethosia* species may be unpalatable to predators (see Parsons, 1998). Evidence of this is provided by the bright colouration of adults and larvae, the latter, where known, also being gregarious. Larvae of *Cethosia*

are capable of moving very quickly and this may be a means of escaping from green tree ants (*Smaragdina* sp.) which frequent the fresh tips of their vine foodplants (Passifloraceae).

Butterflies belonging to the genus *Delias* Hübner are commonly known as “jezebels” and are popular with enthusiasts worldwide, owing to their generally bright ventral surfaces. To date there are 236 species described (G.J.M. Gerrits, pers. comm., 1998); the majority occur within mainland New Guinea where there appears to have been explosive speciation in the Tertiary, possibly due to a complex geological evolution of that island. Elsewhere, members of this genus are distributed from the Himalayas through Southeast Asia to New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Australia. Numerous taxa exist to the west of New Guinea, whilst in the Bismarck Archipelago eight species are recorded and in the Solomon Islands only four species (Arora, 1983).