

## **Butterfly Species Diversity and Checklist from Saiden Area Community Forest, Ri Bhoi District, Meghalaya, India**

**A. D. Marbaniang**

Entomology Laboratory, Department of Zoology, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya, India

**S. R. Hajong**

Entomology Laboratory, Department of Zoology, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya, India

### **Abstract**

Butterflies are ecologically significant insects that function as pollinators and bioindicators of environmental change. The present study was conducted to document the butterfly diversity of the Saiden Area Community Forest, Ri-Bhoi District, Meghalaya, and to establish a baseline inventory for the region. Field surveys were carried out from January to December 2022 using the Modified Pollard Walk method across three habitat types—Riverine Forest, Closed Canopy Forest, and Open Forest. Monthly sampling was undertaken along three 1,000 m transects, and species were identified using standard taxonomic keys. A total of 55 butterfly species belonging to five families were recorded. Nymphalidae, Papilionidae, Hesperidae, Pieridae and Lycaenidae. Several species recorded during the study are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, highlighting the conservation value of the area. Despite anthropogenic pressures such as forest burning and deforestation, the Saiden Area Community Forest supports considerable butterfly diversity due to its heterogeneous vegetation and varied habitat structure. The findings highlight the ecological importance of the area and emphasize the need for continued monitoring and conservation efforts to safeguard its biodiversity.

### **Keywords**

Biodiversity hotspot, Bioindicators, Butterfly diversity, Community Forest, Lepidoptera, Meghalaya, Seasonal variation.