

# On the female of *Charaxes mars mars* Stgr. 1886 (Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae)

by

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One of the rarest butterflies from the island of Celebes and much sought after is *Charaxes mars* Stgr. Up till now only a few specimens have been recorded on which ROTHSCHILD (1900), FRUHSTORFER (1914) and MARTIN (1924) inform us — after rectification of the confusion in the 1891 and 1896 captures — as follows:

1886. 2 ♂ captured by PLATEN in the Minahassa (N. Celebes) for STAUDINGER. One specimen, the type, remained in the collection STAUDINGER, the second came into the possession of HONRATH, and later on was transferred to the ADAMS collection, which finally became the property of the British Museum (Natural History).

1891. The well-known American traveller DOHERTY caught in August and September of this year in the neighbourhood of Maros (S. Celebes) 7 ♂, received by ROTHSCHILD at Tring.

1896. DOHERTY captured several males (10 as far as I can trace) and one female between Maros and Tjamba. The bulk came into the possession of OBERTHÜR at Rennes, which were all (?) purchased by LEVICK, whose collection was bequeathed to the British Museum (Natural History). His specimens bear anyhow the typical OBERTHÜR labels.

1912. MARTIN received a ♂ from Kali Ijo (N.W. coast) in the neighbourhood of Pasangkajo.

Moreover, I am informed about the existence of the following specimens, not mentioned by the above-named authors:

1 ♂ from Celebes in the British Museum (Natural History), without data, but without doubt from the northern part of the island, originating from the ADAMS collection.

1 ♂ from Tondano (Minahassa) collected by C. (?) in September-October 1899 (British Museum Natural History).

2 ♂ in the collection of the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, which specimens originated from P. ZONDERVAN, a schoolmaster and able entomologist at Tondano, who captured them in 1941 near the waterfall of this little town.

Summarizing, there should be known at the moment from N. Celebes 7 ♂, and from the southern part of this island 17 ♂ and 1 ♀.

ROTHSCHILD (1892) described the specimen from the south as a separate subspecies so that we now have *Charaxes mars mars* Stgr., and *Charaxes mars doherthy* Rthsch.

In 1897 OBERTHÜR gave a description of the female of the southern *doherthy* Rthsch.

As appears from the foregoing no female of the northern subspecies is known as yet. Some years ago my friend Mr. A. W. VAN LAER, now at Surabaya (Java), who at the time was a keen entomologist in the Lampongs (South Sumatra) during

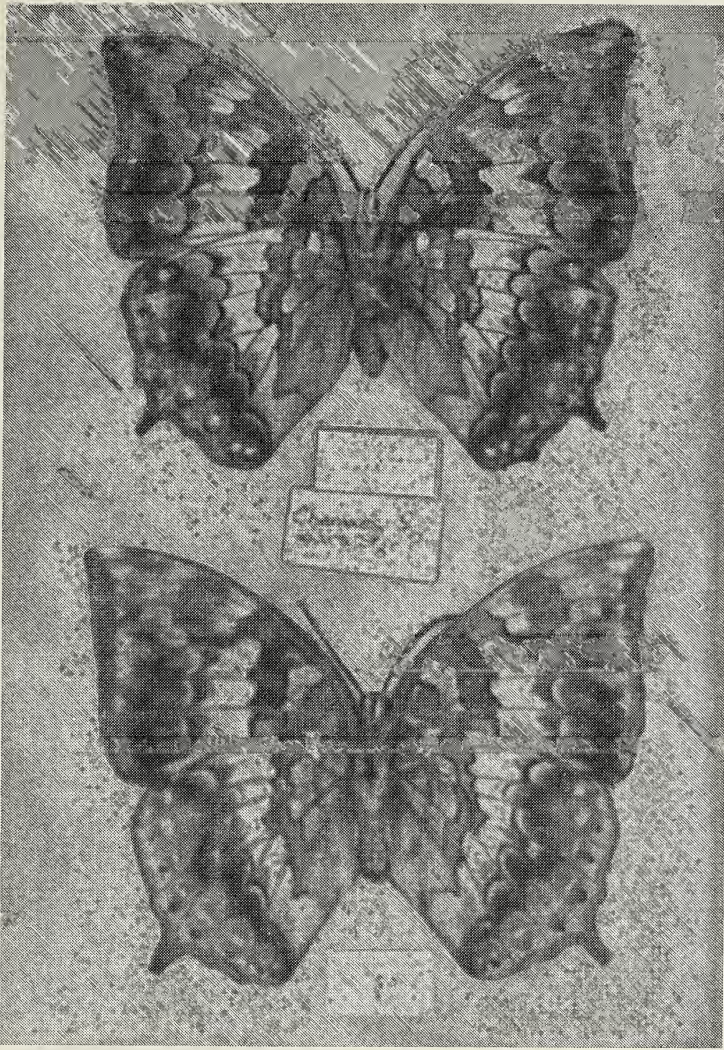


Upperside of *Charaxes mars mars* Stgr. (top) and of *Charaxes mars dobertyi* Rthsch. (bottom).

a trip to the Minahassa made a small collection of butterflies. Amongst this collection I came across a female *Charaxes*, unknown to me, caught on the 8th of June 1947 near Aplā at an altitude of 1200 m, which after further investigation could be nothing else but the missing female of *Ch. mars mars* Stgr. Mr. T. G. HOWARTH of the British Museum (Natural History), whom I wish to thank for his cooperation in this matter, confirmed my identification.

The primary colour of the upper side of the fore wings of this specimen, the allotype, is blackish brown with a white band in the discal area of the wing viz. in spaces 1a, 1b, 2, 3 and 4. The small patch in space 1a is tinged with orange. Apically from this band there are two small white patches in spaces 5 and 6





Underside of *Charaxes mars mars* Stgr. (top) and of *Charaxes mars dobertyi* Rthsch. (bottom).

respectively. There is a complete row of submarginal yellowish orange patches from costa to dorsum. The white band is continued, gradually decreasing in width, on the hind wings in the spaces 7, 6, 5, the apex of the cell and space 3. Beginning in space 5 the white colour becomes somewhat superseded by a beautiful yellowish-orange colour, which further covers the anal and distal parts of the hind wings. Submarginally there is a continuation of the row of yellowish orange patches on the fore wings, a complete row of blackish brown patches each with a clear white spot. The base of the hind wings is blackish brown, gradually passing into the orange of the anal and distal parts.

The underside of both wings is of irregular design. One distinctly sees the



white discal band, which continues on the hind wings as far as the anal margin. There are three white patches apically from the cell instead of two on the upper side of the fore wings and in the apex of these wings a pair of indistinct white patches are to be found. The base of the fore wings is dark grey brown with a white band and a rather indistinct basal patch. The postdiscal band of both wings has an ochreous tinge with a steely blue reflection and the outer part has a dark brown band running from the apex of the fore wings to the tornus of the hind wings. Outwardly of this band is the submarginal row of patches of the upperside, blurred into steely blue streaks on the fore wings and on the hind wings provided with steely blue patches, each of which has distally a dark spot, lined inwardly with metallic green.

Measured from base to apex of fore wing the female of *mars mars* Stgr. is 49 mm.

There is a little difference between the females of both subspecies as Mr. HOWARTH informed me. The female of *mars* Stgr. is on the upperside slightly darker having the yellowish-orange submarginal row of spots of the fore wing less prominent. On the hind wing *dohertyi* Rthsch. has the yellowish suffusion more extensive, actually extending into spaces 6 and 7 towards the costa and outwards of the white discal band which gives the white spots (submarginal) in these two areas the appearance nearer to those towards the tornus. On the underside *dohertyi* is paler than *mars* having less contrast and hardly any of the steely blue reflection.

I am indebted to Mr. W. H. T. TAMS (British Museum, Natural History) for the accompanying photographs, which give a good impression of the females of both subspecies.

The above-mentioned material is now incorporated in the following collections:

**Charaxes mars mars** Stgr.

British Museum (Natural History): 3 ♂♂, 1 ♀; Zoologisches Museum, Berlin: 1 ♂ (type); Zoologische Sammlung des Bayerischen Staates, München: 1 ♂; Museum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden: 2 ♂♂.

**Charaxes mars dohertyi** Rthsch.

British Museum (Natural History): 14 ♂♂ (with type; one ♂ 1891 captures missing), 1 ♀; Museum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden: 1 ♂; my collection (Natuurhistorisch Museum, Rotterdam): 1 ♂.

FRUHSTORFER (1914) mentions a third subspecies viz. *madensis* Rthsch. from Buru, but this is without doubt a good species, which was already the opinion of ROTHCHILD (1900) in his well known monograph on the genus.

#### References

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