

NOTES ON *IOPHANUS PYRRHIAS* IN GUATEMALA (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE)

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The 2006 Guatemala Expedition was able to find a large colony of the rare lycaenid, *Iophanus pyrrias* Godman & Salvin, called the Guatemala Copper, through the help of expedition guide José Mónzon who knew the location of this colony in northwestern Guatemala. In late September 2006, we visited the well-known hot springs site of Fuentes Georginas, in eastern Quetzaltenango Dept. This natural site is in a steep canyon surrounded by forest on three sides and has considerable hot spring activity, making it a popular bathing resort in the pools of hot water by the lodge. The site is at about 2400m elevation and part of the western sides where Volcan Santo Tomas and Volcan Zunil join their slopes.

The butterfly colony in this area is mainly along the road leading to Fuentes Georginas, only a few hundred meters from the main parking lot of the springs area. On the morning of 29 Sep 2006, we were able to find numbers of *I. pyrrias* as they flew about and perched alongside the roadway. Several specimens were collected for deposit in the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (FSCA), with Lepidoptera now housed at McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity, Gainesville. The colony at Fuentes Georginas seems to be extensive, as dozens of adults were seen flying about, but more females than males on that late September day.

Iophanus pyrrias in Guatemala is the southernmost true copper to be found in the New World. It resembles closely some of the North American coppers of the genus *Lycaena*, such as *L. arota* (Boisduval), with the small tails on the hindwings and the dark brownish coloration of the upper sides of the wings. Godman and Salvin (1887) described the *Iophanus* copper (Fig. 1-2) from Guatemala (originally in the genus *Chrysophanus*, a genus now restricted to East Asian coppers). The hostplant of the *Iophanus* larvae remains uncertain. Adults behave like typical *Lycaena* coppers that would be observed in the southwestern United States, with hindwing twitching when perched, so the tails move about, as do many other lycaenids. Males and females are very similar in appearance (Fig. 3-6). The Godman and Salvin (1887) figures (Fig. 1-2) are shown too brown in color and do not show the dorsal blue iridescence of the forewings (Fig. 3-6).

While geographers include Central America with the North American continent, faunistically the Nearctic fauna ends in highland areas of central Mexico (although the Mexican-USA border is treated as a more convenient faunal boundary), but in Guatemala, one still has isolated pockets of Nearctic fauna at high elevation. These last remnants of Nearctic species include both animals and plants, all of which are lost south of Guatemala. *Iophanus pyrrias* is another example of a northern element of the fauna still found in Guatemala, at least in its relationships to the northern *Lycaena* species. The Guatemala Copper is also found in isolated colonies in the mountains of Chiapas, southernmost Mexico.

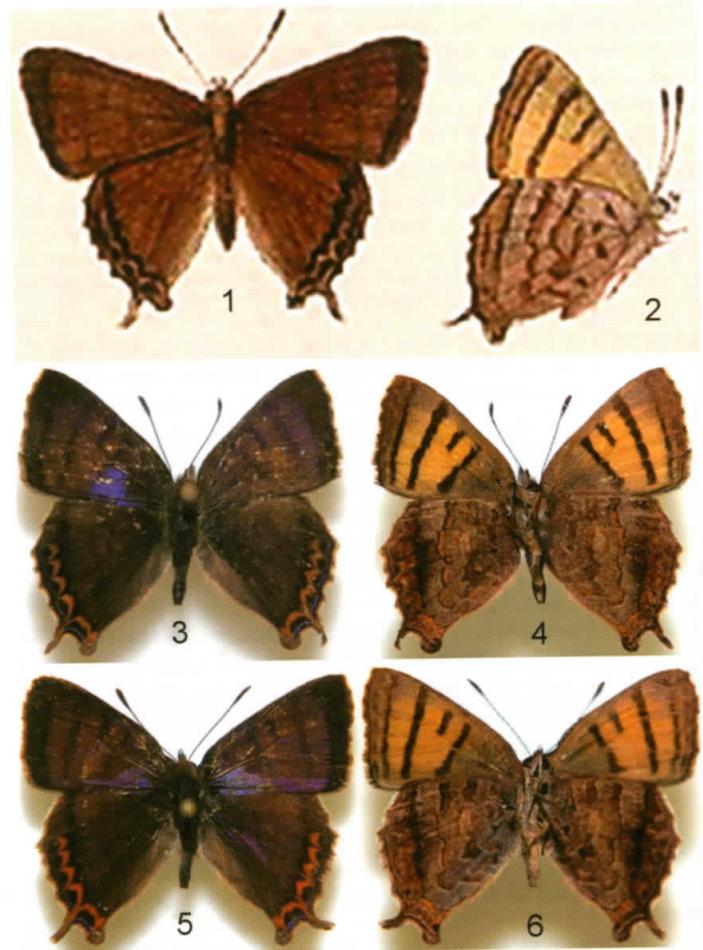


Fig. 1-6. *Iophanus pyrrias* in Guatemala: 1-2) adult (from Godman and Salvin, 1887: pl. 58 (originally Fig. 26-27). 3-4) male (dorsal/ventral), Fuentes Georginas, Guatemala (J. R. Sloten coll.). 5-6) female (dorsal/ventral), same locality (J. B. Heppner coll., FSCA). All figures ca. 1.5x life size.

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REFERENCES CITED

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