

AN AGGREGATION OF *CALLIMORPHA EQUITALIS*  
(ARCTIIDAE) IN THE HIMALAYAS

The hill station of Mussoorie in northwest India is famous for its great variety of butterflies, moths and beetles. On June 1, 1960, while hiking several miles off Tehri Road near Mussoorie to a place locally known as "Scott's Hole", we witnessed a most unusual aggregation of tiger-moths at an altitude of about 5,000 feet.

When collecting butterflies in the nullah approaching "Scott's Hole", our movements disturbed some moths. These moths attracted our attention to nearby shrubs and trees, which were literally covered with moths. The branches drooped under their weight. The first swing of my net at one of these branches netted about forty *Callimorpha* moths. The net seemed so heavy that I instantly knelt on the ground and began to select the perfect specimens for the American Museum of Natural History and for my own collection. Unfortunately, no member of our party had brought his camera and no one wanted to walk back six miles to get one.

As we knew of no way to count this huge aggregation of moths, we estimated that they were present by the thousands or even tens of thousands.

The moths seemed very listless. Only after beating a moth-covered branch with the handle of my net was I able to make the moths fly. They settled on nearby trees and shrubs where they were easily captured. Whether this aggregation of thousands of the moths represented a form of hibernation or aestivation or a normal rest-stop during migration, I am unable to say. In any case, this was the largest aggregation of moths of a single species that I had ever seen.

Mr. N. T. NADKARNY of the Bombay Natural History Society identified the moths as *Callimorpha equitalis*. Mounted specimens measured from 65 to 75 mm. According to MEYRICK *Callimorpha* (= *Panaxia*) is the most ancestral form of Arctiidae, but HAMPSON (*Moths of India*; 1892-96) placed it in the Hypsidae.

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