

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH

ATTRACTING AND PHOTOGRAPHING *AGRIAS AMYDON* (NYMPHALIDAE) IN BRAZIL

I have visited the tropics 19 times within the last 22 years; 15 of those trips have been to Central and South America where numerous species of *Agrias* occur. Yet I had neither collected nor photographed a single individual of *Agrias* until my most recent visit to Rondonia, Brazil, in 1992.

As with many tropical nymphalids, *Agrias* are attracted to organic substances, such as fermenting fruit, decaying fish, feces, and urine. *Agrias claudina* and *Agrias amydon philatelica* previously have been photographed feeding upon fermenting fruit (by J. Nation and P. DeVries). There is anecdotal evidence that *Agrias* are attracted to large decaying animals (e.g., cows) as well.

During three trips to Fazenda Rancho Grande near Cacauplandia, about 60 km south of Ariquemes, Rondonia, Brazil, I concentrated on photographing butterflies. To attract my subjects, I used fermenting fruit (banana and papaya), feces, feces mixed with urine, fresh urine, urine several days old, freshwater fish (usually 2-3 pounds) in various stages of decomposition, and rotting sardines. These baits attracted numerous nymphalids, including *Caligo*, *Morpho*, *Adelpha*, *Doxocopa*, *Batesia*, *Napeocles*, and *Prepona*, but no *Agrias*.

During my last trip to Rondonia, five or six participants collected individuals of *Agrias amydon*. One was taken in flight, one was picked by hand from beneath a leaf, one was attracted to urine on the ground, and several were caught in butterfly traps baited with rotting fish. On 23 April 1992, I photographed a fresh male of *Agrias amydon bellatrix* (see Plate 1) on a wet dirt road through virgin forest about 15-20 km east of Fazenda Rancho Grande. The individual was attracted by urine and white toilet paper wetted with 2-3 week old liquefied fish. The butterfly approached the bait, flying slowly in circles. After landing on the ground it changed positions, sipping various fluids, most of the time with its wings held closed over the thorax. On several occasions it took off and returned a short time later.

I photographed the individual using a Nikon FA camera fitted with a Micro-NIKKOR 200 mm 1:4 lens. A Nikon SB-15 electronic flash attached to the hot shoe on the camera was used in conjunction with Ektachrome 200 ASA slide film. The Nikon FA camera has a TTL (through the lens) metering system that automatically admits the necessary amount of light from the Nikon SB-15 flash when in TTL mode. Exposures were taken at 1/250 sec at aperture f-32. Specific determination of the butterfly was confirmed by Thomas Emmel.

GEORGE O. KRIZEK, 2111 Bancroft Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.



Plate 1. *Agrias amydon bellatrix*.