

HEMIARGUS RAMON (DOGNIN, 1887) (LYCAENIDAE: POLYOMMATINAE) A NEW RESIDENT BUTTERFLY OF THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

By: Lázaro Roque Albelo, Valentina Cruz Bedón, and Gerardo Lamas

The butterfly species *Hemiargus ramon* is distributed from southwestern Ecuador to northwestern Chile (Tarapaca); however, until now it has not been collected in the Galápagos Islands (Linsley and Usinger 1966; Linsley 1977).

Between January 1995 and August 1996 two authors (LRA and VCB) collected a series of specimens of this tiny species on the islands of Baltra, Española, Floreana, Isabela, San Cristóbal, Santa Cruz and Santiago (Figure 1).

The butterflies of the family Lycaenidae from the genus *Hemiargus* have slow flight and are generally associated with areas of human habitation. In Galápagos, we have observed oviposition of this species on the following plants: *Cucumis dipsaceus* (Cucurbitaceae), *Cassia hirsuta* (Leguminosae), *Prosopis juliflora* (Leguminosae), *Neptunia plena* (Leguminosae), *Rhynchosia minima* (Leguminosae) and *Phaseolus atropurpureus* (Leguminosae). Another lycaenid species occurs in the archipelago, *Leptotes parrhasioides* (Williams 1911), which is similar in external appearance to *H. ramon*. Both species form small metapopulations closely associated with their specific host plants.

Roque (in press) recognized three mechanisms by which the butterflies can arrive to the Galápagos Islands: a) on natural rafts; b) by air, flying actively or passively; or finally, c) transported intentionally or accidentally by humans. It is difficult to determine which of the three mechanisms could have been responsible for the arrival of *H. ramon* to the Galápagos Islands but it's accidental introduction by man seems the most likely. Upon arrival the establishment of this species would not have been difficult since it could utilize many host plants, mainly from the Leguminosae family which is well represented in Galápagos.

Voucher specimens of *H. ramon* have been deposited in the entomological collection of the Charles Darwin Research Station Museum on Isla Santa Cruz, Galápagos and the Museo de Historia Natural, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima, Perú.

LITERATURE CITED

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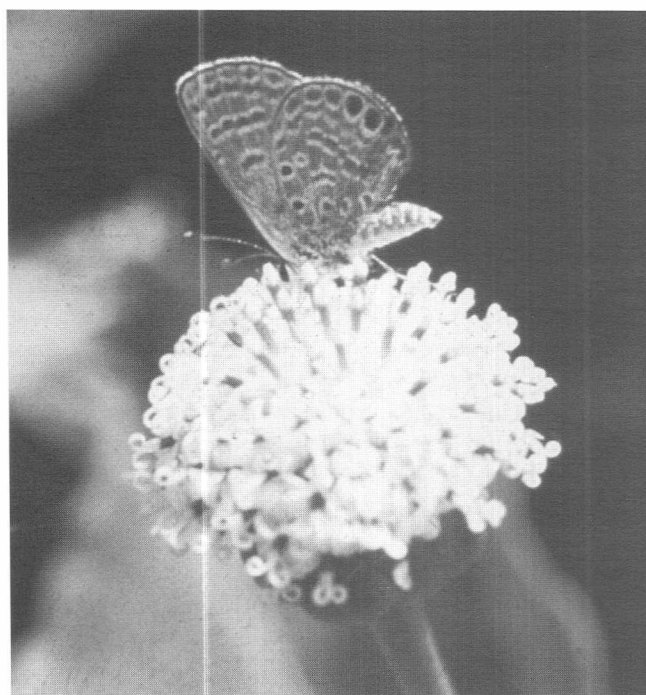


Figure 1. *H. ramon* on flowers of the endemic Galápagos plant *Scalesia affinis*.

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Lázaro Roque Albelo, Charles Darwin Research Station, Puerto Ayora, Galápagos. Valentina Cruz Bedón, Puerto Ayora, Galápagos. Gerardo Lamas, Museo de Historia Natural, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Apartado 14-0434, Lima-14, Perú.