



## **Alva's Butterfly Park, Mijar, Moodbidire**

Butterflies and moths are the only insects to have scales on their wings, making them very bright and colourful. The habitats of butterflies are strictly terrestrial. Virtually all butterflies are associated with plants and trees; therefore, their occurrence depends on the presence of food plants and flowering plants. They undergo four different life stages starting from egg, caterpillar, Pupa and Adult.

Butterflies are very sensitive to any changes in their environment, hence they are termed as biological indicators. Their presence or absence or their number is a good indication of a healthy environment. Observing butterflies as biological indicators, the diversity of habitats can be well documented. Different species of plants and habitats will attract a wide variety of butterflies, which play a vital role in the pollination of various flowering plants besides a key component of the food chain. India hosts about 1,504 species of butterflies of which, the Western Ghats hosts about 346 species.

The Western Ghats is one of the hottest biodiversity hotspots in India and the world. Many butterflies are endemic to the Western Ghats, making them restricted to only a few forest types in the Western Ghats. Rapid urbanization and industrialization have put tremendous pressure on all forest-dwelling species. Butterflies are one such very important key species, whose population is decreased severely in the last two decades. The concept of Butterfly Park or Butterfly Garden is an 'in situ (not excluding butterflies from their habitat) conservation method to create habitats for butterflies to live there. There are different types of Butterfly parks (open and closed) seen globally.

The Moodbidire taluk, in Dakshina Kannada district, is one of the few taluks in the Western Ghats region of Karnataka with good green coverage. Alva's Institute of Engineering and Technology, Mijar have identified a suitable location with sufficient water facility, availability of host and nectar plants for these ecologically important species.

  
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The park was created way back in 2017 by planting more than 400 saplings covering over 60 plus species which are locally native to the region and good food source for butterflies and other insects. The host spectrum includes herbs, shrubs, climbers and trees. These host plants are either sources of nectar, flowering or medicinal or fruit yielding.

In addition to the planting of host plants, a shallow pond was created for butterflies to mud puddle (they draw the required salts from the moist soil around the pond for the body requirements).

The entire area has proper care with frequent watering through low-speed sprinklers and drip irrigation methods to maintain the plants' growth. The entire area is free from all sorts of pesticides, insecticides and chemical fertilizers, to create a healthy environment for butterflies. Presently, 120 plus species have been documented from the Butterfly Park with many endemic species.

**Highlighting features of the park:**

- ❖ 124 Species, covering all six families in India are present in the Butterfly Park.
- ❖ The park has become a migratory route to many migrating butterflies in the Western Ghats.
- ❖ A green, clean and completely eco-friendly Butterfly Park with plastic and chemical-free zones.
- ❖ A permanent residence for many insect-eating birds, odonates and mating grounds for our national bird 'Indian Peafowl'.
- ❖ On-site learning centre for students.





**Butterfly park in 2018**



**Butterfly park in 2020**





**Butterfly park in 2022**

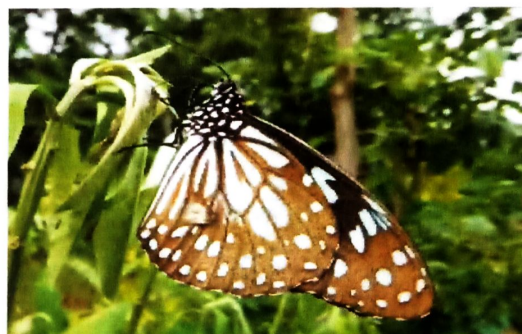
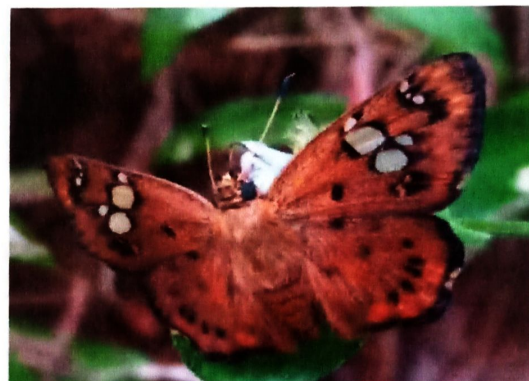


**Peacock displaying its feathers to impress females in the Butterfly Park**





**Students orientation program on importance of butterfly watching**



**Butterfly pictures from AIET butterfly park**