Information about the scientific activities of the Cesa in Africa

by Muhabbet Kemal Koçak

A Short Note on the Studies of the Lepidoptera on the Soutpansberg Mountains (Limpopo, South Africa)

In northern South Africa, the authors visited privately the Soutpansberg Mountains, especially Medike Mountain Reserve Station four times between the years of 2003 and 2004. This was their first attempts for observing, photographing and taking video records of the behaviours of the South African butterflies and moths in their natural environments. In order to contribute for determining the Lepidoptera fauna of the Soutpansberg Mountains, a remarkable collection of the whole Lepidopteran groups was made. The preparation of the specimens for scientific publications has been continuing. As the first results, the articles with the numbers 26, and 37 in the list below, were published in the Cesa serials. Earlier articles on African Lepidoptera were based upon the Koçak’s expeditions to Ethiopia (no. 27, 28, 32, 34). Determination of the specimens of the Ethiopian collection has been continuing. Other publications, listed at the end of this issue, are the temporary results of the enormous Cesa Project entitled “Lepidoptera of Africa (LAF)”, and of the nomenclatural studies. Further results will issue in the Cesa publications at irregular intervals.

1 http://www.cesa-tr.org/Cesaprojects.htm
Fig. 1 – The author, Muhabbet Kemal during her observation at Medike western Soutpansberg Mountains, 21 September 2004 (Cesa)

Fig. 2 – The author, Muhabbet Kemal during her observation at Medike western Soutpansberg Mountains, 3 April 2004 (Cesa)
Fig. 3– An accompanist, African Grasshopper, Medike 24 March 2004 (Cesa)

Fig. 4– Sand River in the direction of north, crossing the Soutpansberg Mountains near Medike, 21 September 2004 (Cesa)
Fig. 5 - Muhabbet Kemal together with our dear friend Marietjie Underhay (on the right), during an observation tour around Medike, 18 September 2004 (Cesa)

Fig. 6 - Muhabbet Kemal together with our dear friend Prof. Dr. Ian Gaigher at Lajuma Highland, Soutpansberg Mountains, 22 January 2003 (Cesa)
Fig. 7 - Muhabbet Kemal together with our dear friend Mr. P.F. le Roux and his partners, at Cycad Forest, eastern Soutpansberg Mountains, 31 January 2003 (Cesa)

Fig. 8 – Authors together with our dear friend Willie Botha during a discuss of the Lepidoptera studies. Louis Trichardt, 26 January 2003 (Cesa)
Fig. 9 – Authors together with our dear friends Hannes and Marietjie Underhay, at Medike, 3 February, 2003 (Cesa)

Turkish entomologists study local butterflies

LOUIS TRICHARDT – Butterflies are a good indicator of the condition of the environment and when studying these insects it seems that the Sonntauberg has natural resources in abundance.

This is according to two entomologists from Turkey who are on a three-week visit to research the butterflies and moths of the Sonntauberg. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Omer Koçak and his associate Dr. Mustafa Kemal Koçak from the Yonca Yel University in Van, are in East Turkey discovered the Sonntauberg when searching the Internet for information on South Africa. They are both from the Biology Department of the Faculty of Science and Literature of their University.

“We initially intended to take a helicopter ride in South Africa, but we were not sure if it was safe. We had an interview with the local newspaper, which we consider the best in South Africa. It was an opportunity to introduce the butterfly farm of Sonntauberg and to complete it with photos of the species that we observed,”

The Koçaks arrived in Louis Trichardt on January 14 in the middle of a heat wave of 36°C. After having left their country on January 1, they travelled to the Sonntauberg and stayed there for a month. They found one butterfly that was common to both the Sonntauberg and Turkey.

The butterflies in South Africa are very different species. They are not easily found and are not photographed. The size of their wings and colouration are more intense. The Koçaks explained that butterflies are very sensitive creatures and good indicators of disturbance in the environment.

If the diversity of butterflies is high, it indicates that pollution is low and that the environment is in a good condition. He added that as opposed to what is common in Turkey, he found the natural environment of the Sonntauberg to be in a favourable condition.

“Pre-butterflies species living in mountainous areas are rare in the Sonntauberg. The rare species are the Hesperia Forsten and the Papilio heliodorus, which is the Riesentiger.”

In addition, he added that since the Koçaks have been here, the local newspaper has written about their work. The newspaper has covered all their visits and featured photos of the butterflies they observed.

The Koçaks are with Prof. Gauthier Lejeune, who has proposed an informative text on the Sonntauberg. The Conservancy is a center of fauna and flora in which the Koçaks will gladly assist. The management of the Koçaks is under the Limpopo Environmental Council, which is responsible for the area.

The final remark of the Koçaks was: “We appreciate the hospitality of the people here, and Louis Trichardt is a wonderful!”

Fig. 10 – An interview about the authors in the regional Newspaper, at Louis Trichardt, South Africa, 24 January 2003 (Cesa)
Fig. 11 - Studying in the nights at Medike, South Africa, 16 April, 2004 (Cesa)

Fig. 12 - Observing butterflies by days at Medike, South Africa, 17 January, 2003 (Cesa)
Miscellaneous Images on the Biodiversity of Soutpansberg Mountains (figs.13-36)
Miscellaneous Images on the Biodiversity of Soutpansberg Mountains (figs.37-60)
List of the 45 Publications on the Lepidoptera of Africa


http://www.metafro.be/Members/Cesa/Cesapublafri15.pdf/base_view


http://www.metafro.be/Members/Cesa/Cesapublafri17.pdf/base_view

http://www.metafro.be/Members/Cesa/Cesapublafri18.pdf/base_view


**Acknowledgement:** We thank sincerely to our dear friends Prof. Dr. Ian Gaigher, Mrs. Marietjie Underhay, Mr. Hannes Underhay, Mrs. Willie Botha, and Mr. P.F. le Roux for their kind hospitalities and helps during our stay in Louis Trichardt, South Africa.