



# drishti

## Golden Birdwing: India's Largest Butterfly

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### Why in News

Recently, a Himalayan **butterfly** known as **Golden Birdwing** (*Troides aeacus*) has been discovered as India's largest butterfly after 88 years.

It has replaced an **unknown specimen** which a british army officer Brigadier Evans had **recorded in 1932**.



### Key Points

- **Discovery:**

The female was recorded from **Didihat in Uttarakhand**, the male was from the **Wankhar Butterfly Museum in Shillong**, Meghalaya.

- **Characteristics:**

- With a **wingspan of 194 mm**, the female of the species is marginally larger than the Southern Birdwing (190 mm).
  - Earlier, the largest Indian butterfly that was recorded in 1932 was an individual of the **Southern Birdwing (*Troides minos*)**, which was then treated as a subspecies of the **Common Birdwing (*Troides helena*)**.
  - However, the specimen that Evans measured **was unknown** and no other **butterfly measured** as much as the 190 mm that he recorded.
- The male Golden Birdwing is much smaller at 106 mm.

- **Measurement:** The only measurement used in the study of **Lepidoptera** is **wingspan** in which butterflies are measured from the wing base to the tip.

## Butterfly

- Butterflies are insects from the **order Lepidoptera of phylum Arthropoda** which also includes moths.
- Adult butterflies have large, often brightly coloured wings, and conspicuous, fluttering flight.
- **Significance:**
  - **Rich Biodiversity:** Abundance of butterflies in any area represents the rich biodiversity.
  - **Indicator Species:** The butterfly acts as an indicator species.  
An indicator species provides information on the **overall condition of the ecosystem** and of other species in that ecosystem. They reflect the quality and changes in environmental conditions as well as aspects of community composition.
  - **Pollinator:** It acts as a **pollinator** by helping in pollination and conserving several species of plants.



**Southern Birdwing**

- **Scientific Name:** *Troides minos*
- **Description:** It is a large and striking butterfly **endemic to south India**.
- With a wingspan of 140–190 mm, it is considered as one of the largest butterflies of India.
- **Protection Status:** Least Concern in the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**.

**Source: TH**