

Assessment of Butterfly Species Diversity and Conservation Needs in Okomu National Park, Edo State

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Abstract: This study assessed the diversity and abundance of butterfly species in relation to environmental factors within Okomu National Park. Butterflies are widely recognized as ecological bio-indicators due to their sensitivity to environmental changes. They play essential roles in pollination, ecosystem balance, and biodiversity maintenance. Sampling was conducted using multiple methods, including line transects, hand sweep nets, fruit bait, and organic attractants. Data collected between August 2025 and February 2026 were analyzed using descriptive statistics, diversity indices, and Pearson correlation. A total of 137 butterfly species across five families were recorded: Nymphalidae, Papilionidae, Pieridae, Lycaenidae, and Hesperidae. The Nymphalidae family was the most dominant, while Hesperidae had the lowest representation. Findings indicate that butterfly abundance is significantly higher during the wet season, highlighting the importance of seasonal variation. Overall, the butterfly population in Okomu National Park is stable, reflecting effective conservation practices and limited human disturbance.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Butterflies are diurnal insects belonging to the order Lepidoptera, characterized by slender bodies, clubbed antennae, and brightly colored wings. Beyond their aesthetic appeal, butterflies play vital ecological roles as pollinators and environmental indicators.

Globally, butterfly populations are declining due to habitat destruction, climate change, and pollution. Their sensitivity to environmental conditions—such as temperature, humidity, and vegetation—makes them important for monitoring ecological stability.

This study aims to evaluate the abundance and distribution of butterfly species in Okomu National Park, a protected tropical habitat in Nigeria.

The recent openings of most of the compartments which initially was difficult to access due to obstructive canopy closure for transect walk, was advantage upon this assessment.

➤ Significance of the Study

- **Environmental Indicators:** Butterflies respond quickly to environmental changes, making them reliable indicators of ecosystem health.
- **Biodiversity Monitoring:** High butterfly diversity reflects a healthy ecosystem supporting various species.
- **Scientific Research:** Butterflies serve as model organisms in ecological and evolutionary studies.
- **Conservation Planning:** Provides data to guide habitat protection and restoration efforts.
- **Educational Value:** Useful for teaching ecological concepts and environmental awareness.
- **Sustainable Land Use:** Supports development of biodiversity-friendly agricultural and urban practices.

➤ *Field Research and Butterfly Monitoring Activities*

Fig 1 Field Research and Butterfly Monitoring Activities

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS➤ *Study Area*

Okomu National Park is located in Ovia South-West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, covering approximately 200 km². It lies between latitude 6°20'N and longitude 5°16'E.



Fig 2 Map of Okomu National Park

The study was conducted from August 2025 to February 2026, with structured weekly sampling to capture seasonal variations.

➤ Sampling Techniques

Butterflies were sampled at different times of the day (8:30 AM – 5:00 PM) using:

- Hand sweep nets (primary method)
- Fruit bait (fermented fruits such as banana, pineapple, orange)
- Organic attractants (e.g., animal droppings, urine)
- Line transect walks

Peak butterfly activity was observed between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM, especially during sunny conditions.



Fig 3 Animal Dumps (Preciesly Monking and Silvet Cat)
Highly Attractractive to Butterfly

➤ Line Transect Method

Transects (approximately 300 meters) were established, and butterflies within a 5meter radius were recorded. This method allowed for accurate estimation of species richness and population density.

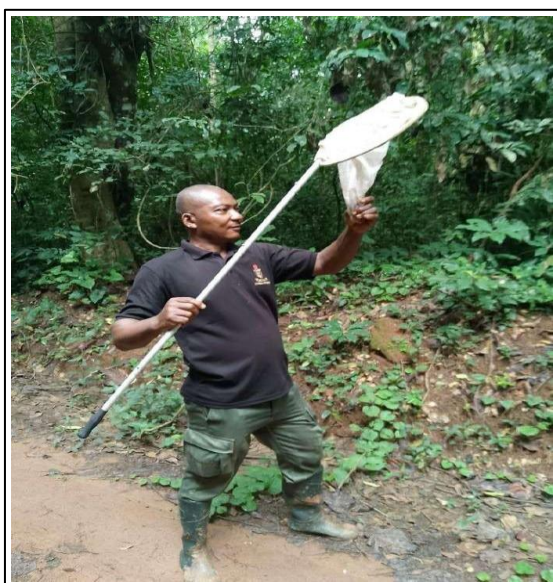


Fig 4 Line Transect Walk along Various Compartments

➤ Study Locations

Sampling was conducted across multiple ecological zones, including:

- Forest edges
- Closed canopy forests
- Riparian habitats
- Grasslands
- Shrublands
- Plantation areas

These varied habitats contributed to the diversity observed.

- Arakhuan Base Camp: N6°20'35.7'' E005°21'34.5'' Ele. 49m
- Shooting Range: N6°20'38.2'' E005°20'16.3'' Ele. 108m
- Compartment 61: N06°20'08.5'' E005°20'27.4'' Ele. 54m
- Gravel Road: N06°22'18.0'' E005°20'53.1'' Ele. 98m
- Arakhuan Gate: N06°21'02.0'' E005°20'26.4'' Ele. 75m
- Compartment 74: N06°19'54.1'' E005°20'00.4'' Ele. 75m
- Compartment 73: N06°19'52.8'' E005°19'40.9'' Ele. 63m
- Compartment 96: N06°17'38.8'' E005°19'17.3'' Ele. 35m
- Oba bush junction: N06°17'14.7'' E005°19'15.7'' Ele. 32m
- Okomu Oil Palm Ext. 1: N06°23'03.9'' E005°22'30.9'' Ele. 80m

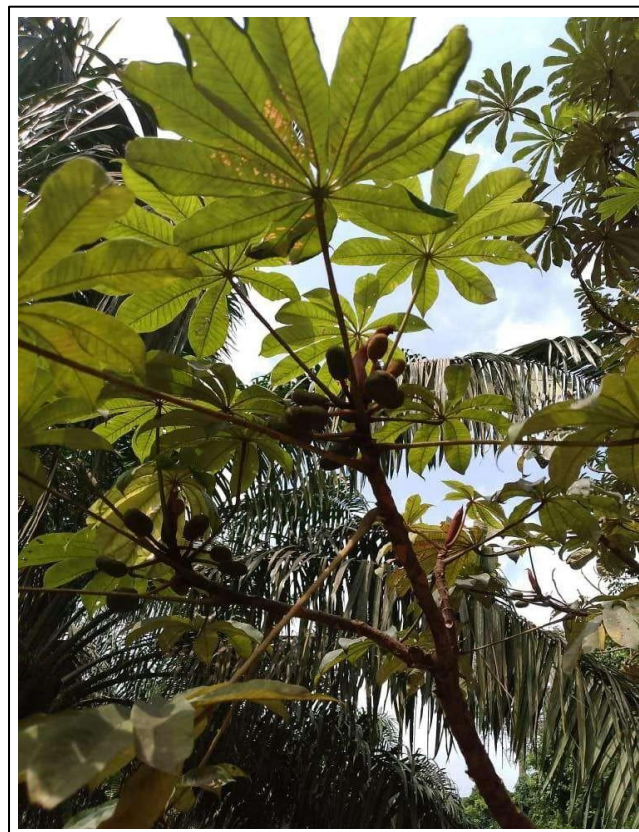


Fig 5 Butterfly Individuals Feeding on Mosanga Tree

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 137 butterfly species were identified across five major families. Key findings include:

- Nymphalidae was the most dominant family
- Pieridae, Papilionidae and Lycaenidae showed moderate abundance

- Hesperidae had the lowest representation

➤ Data Illustration and Biodiversity Analysis

The Chart below illustrates the relative diversity of butterfly families identified during the study. Seasonal variation significantly influenced butterfly abundance, with substantially greater populations observed during the wet season.

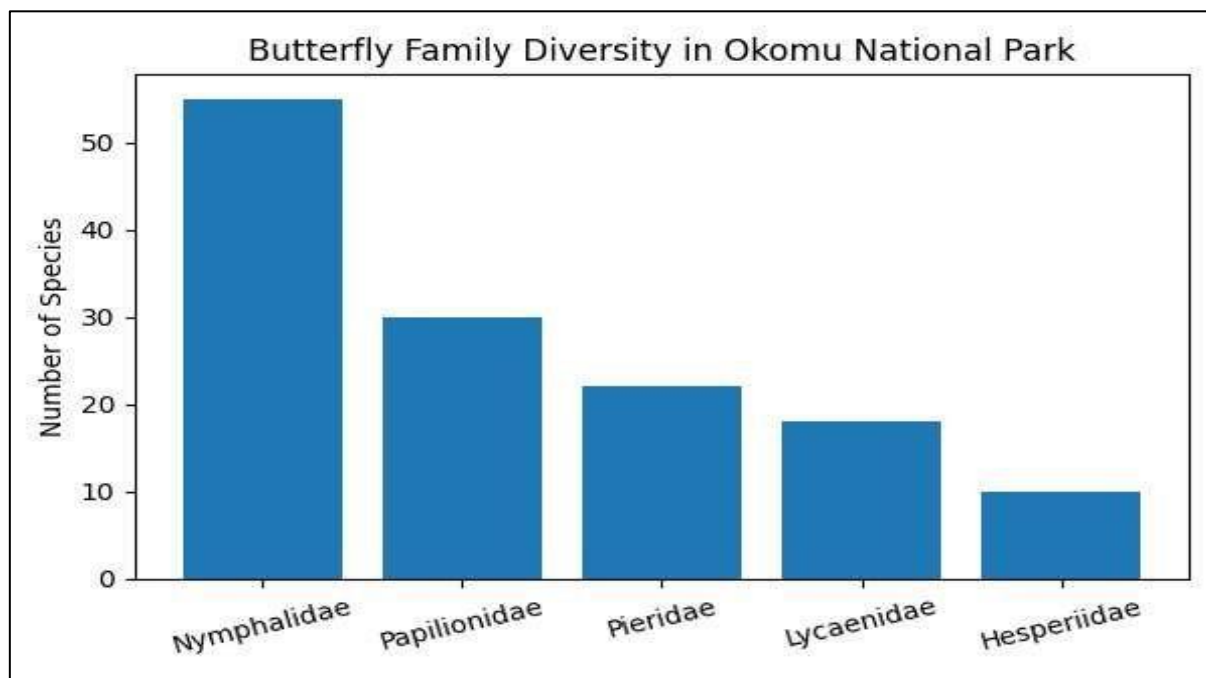


Fig 6 Butterfly Family Diversity in Okomu National Park

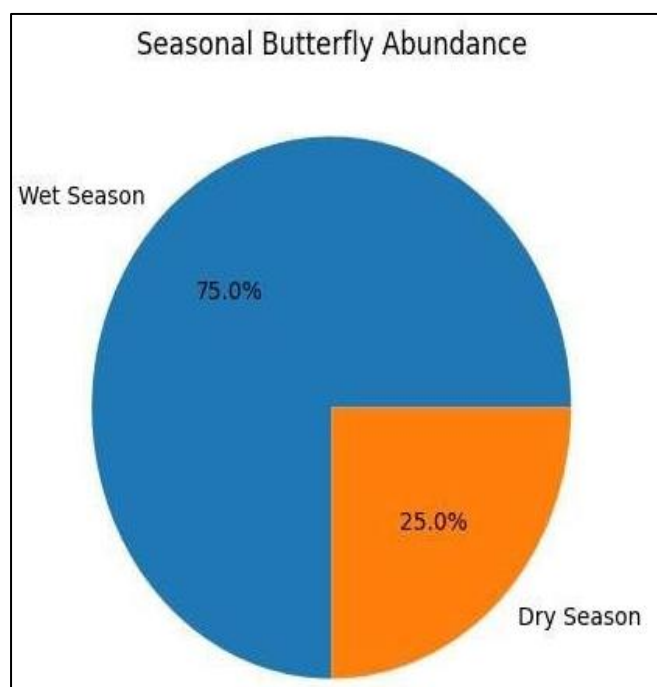


Fig 7 Seasonal Butterfly Abundance

Papilio Dardanus, Papilio Nireus(banded green swallow tail), Charaxex brutus, Prepona Chromius, Papilio aegaeus, Papilio Lormieri, Tirumala Limniace(dark blue

tiger), Hypolimnas saimasis, Hypolimna anthedon, Catopsilia, Euthalia aconthea, Cymothoe caenis, Tailed pasha, Catonephele, Palla violiniteas, Nephronia thalassina, Belenois, Mylothris chloris, Papilio cyproeopilia, Charaxex bernadus, Catuna oberthueri(pathfinder), Junonia terea, Euripus nyctilius, Melanittis leda, Phalanta Phalanta, Asota caricae, Acraea acerata, Charaxex enpale, Cyrestis Camillus, Eurema(grass yellow), Acraea, Graphium Agamemnon, Graphium antheus, Graphium poliscene, Photogoniomarpa, Salamis pharassus, Salamis duprei, Lomographa vesteliata, Charaxex etesipe, Junonia orithya, Eupreadea thermis, Genus amauris, Hypolimnas misippus, Arhopala centaurus, Eupreadea sarcoptere, Opsipharis cassina, Udaspes folus, Enthalia acenthea, Cymothoe sangaris, Surpha erymaenthis, Divana diva, Asota heliconia, Leptosia nina, Nyctemera adversata, Limenitis populi, Papilio menestheus, Papilio bromium, Amauris niavius, Hypolimnas bolina, Charaxex lucretus, Danaus crisippus, Charaxes etheocles, Junonia cymodoce, Bebearia mardania, Precise arthesis, Salamis cactis, Mylothris apias, Neptis hylas, Cathosia biblis, Chlosyne necteis, Junonia oenone(dark blue pansy), Elymniosis bammakoo, Pipevine swallowtail, Acraea herta, Acraea abdera, Junonia hedonia, Papilio demodocus, Tanaccia pelea, Melanitis phedima, Myscelia ethusa, Belenois aurota, Tasta moth, Acraea terpsicore, Melanchroia chephise, Castniidae, Ariadne merione, Salamis cacti, Precis pelargy, Phelanittis, Belenoise creona, Junonia iphita, Graphium polistratus, Chocolate pansy, Papilio zarmoxis,

Papilio Hesperus, Gonepterys rhamni, Julia, Monarch, Little yellow, Silver washed, Summer azure, Colias erocus, Neozephyrus quercus, Hypaurotis corydon, Graphium angolanus, Papilio res-schultzei, Eupalamides cyparissias, Graphium illyris hamatus, Phoebis sennae, Claudless sulphur, Pieridae, Catopsilia, Papilio cyproeophita, Charaxes eupale, Papilio phorcas, Graphium liponesco, Agathine mylothris, Catopsilia florella, Catopsilia pyranthe, Antheraea yamamai, Charaxes varanes, Euphaedra ceres, Tirumala retiverana, Genus gonimbrasia Junonia lemonias, Papilio demoleus, Lycaena phlaea, Celastrina argiolus, Speyeria idalia, Aglais milberti, Erebia epiphron, Anthocharis cardamines, Abisara neophron, Epargyreus clarus, Danaus plexippus, Danaus eresimus, Asterocampa celtis, Anthocharis lanceolata, Ascia monuste, Nica flavilla.

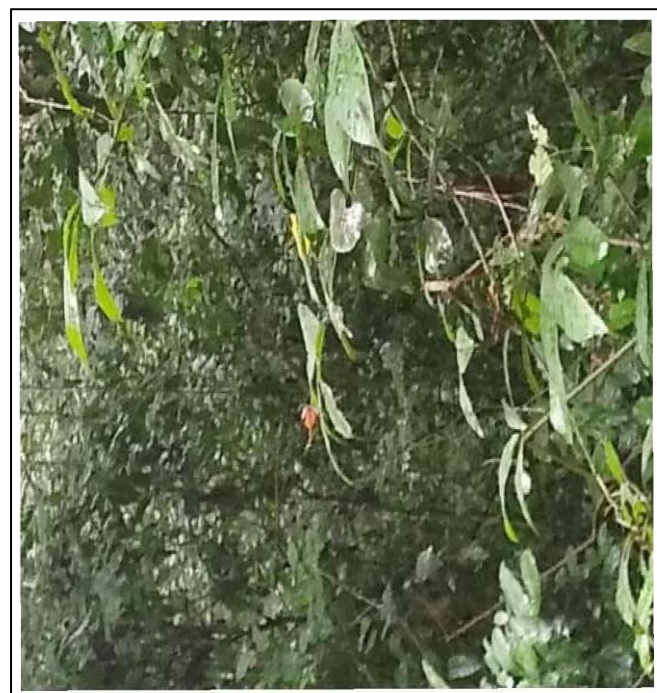


Fig 8 Cross Section of Butterfly Pollinating

➤ Key Observations

- Butterfly diversity was highest in protected and undisturbed habitats
- Rainfall significantly influenced abundance, with higher populations in the wet season
- Areas with greater plant diversity supported more butterfly species
- Open canopy areas improved visibility and sampling efficiency

Environmental factors such as rainfall, temperature, and vegetation were major drivers of species distribution.

➤ Conservation Recommendations

- Strengthen conservation policies within protected areas
- Promote ecological research and biodiversity monitoring
- Encourage eco-tourism to support conservation funding
- Expand studies to identify rare or unrecorded species

- Increase Public Environmental Education and Awareness Campaign
- Develop Long-Term Species Documentation and Biodiversity Research

IV. CONCLUSION

The study confirms that Okumu National Park is an Ecologically important habitat supporting Butterfly Diversity and environmental stability. Protecting this habitat will contribute significantly to biodiversity conservation, ecosystem resilience, pollination, assustainable environmental management in Nigeria.

The Butterfly abundance is strongly influenced by seasonal variations, with peak activity during the wet season, A decline in butterfly populations was observed during the dry season due to reduced rainfall and increased temperature.

The presence of diverse plant species plays a critical role in sustaining butterfly populations, emphasizing the importance of habita conservation.

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NAME: HYPOLIMNAS SALMACIS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: CATOPSILIA FLORELA
FAMILY: PIERIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: EUTHALIA ACONTHEA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: CHARAXES LUCRETIVUS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: HAMADRYAS LAODAMIA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: PALLA VIOLINITENS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: CHAREXES ETESIPE
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: HAMADRYAS FEBRUA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: CYMOTHOE EGESTA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: NEPHERONIAL THALASSINA
FAMILY: PIERIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: BELENOIS CALYPSO
FAMILY: PIERIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: MYLOTHRIS CHLORIS
FAMILY: PIERIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: PAPILIO ECHERIOIDES
FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: CHARAXES BERNARDUS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: CATUNA OBERTHUERI
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: EURIPUS NYCTELIUS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: MELANITIS LEDA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: PHALANTA PHALANTA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: ACRAEA CABIRA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: CHARAXES EUPALE
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: EUREMA HECABE
FAMILY: PIERIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: CYRESTIS CAMILUS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: ACRAEA HORTA
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LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: GRAPHIUM LEONIDAS
FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: DANAUS CRISIPPUS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: LOMOGRAPHA VESTALIATA
FAMILY: PIERIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: JUNONIA ORITHYA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK

NAME:



UDASPES FOLUS

FAMILY: HESPERIIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: HYPOLIMNAS MISSIPPUS

FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK

NAME:



EUPHAEDRA SARCOPTERA

FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE



NAME: ARHOPALA CENTAURUS

FAMILY: LYNCAENIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: *Salamis duprei*

FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: *Salamis parhassus*

FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: *Graphium liponesco*

FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: *Graphium policeses policeses*

FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: *Graphium antheus*

FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: *Graphium polistratus*

FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: *Graphium illyris hamatus*

FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE

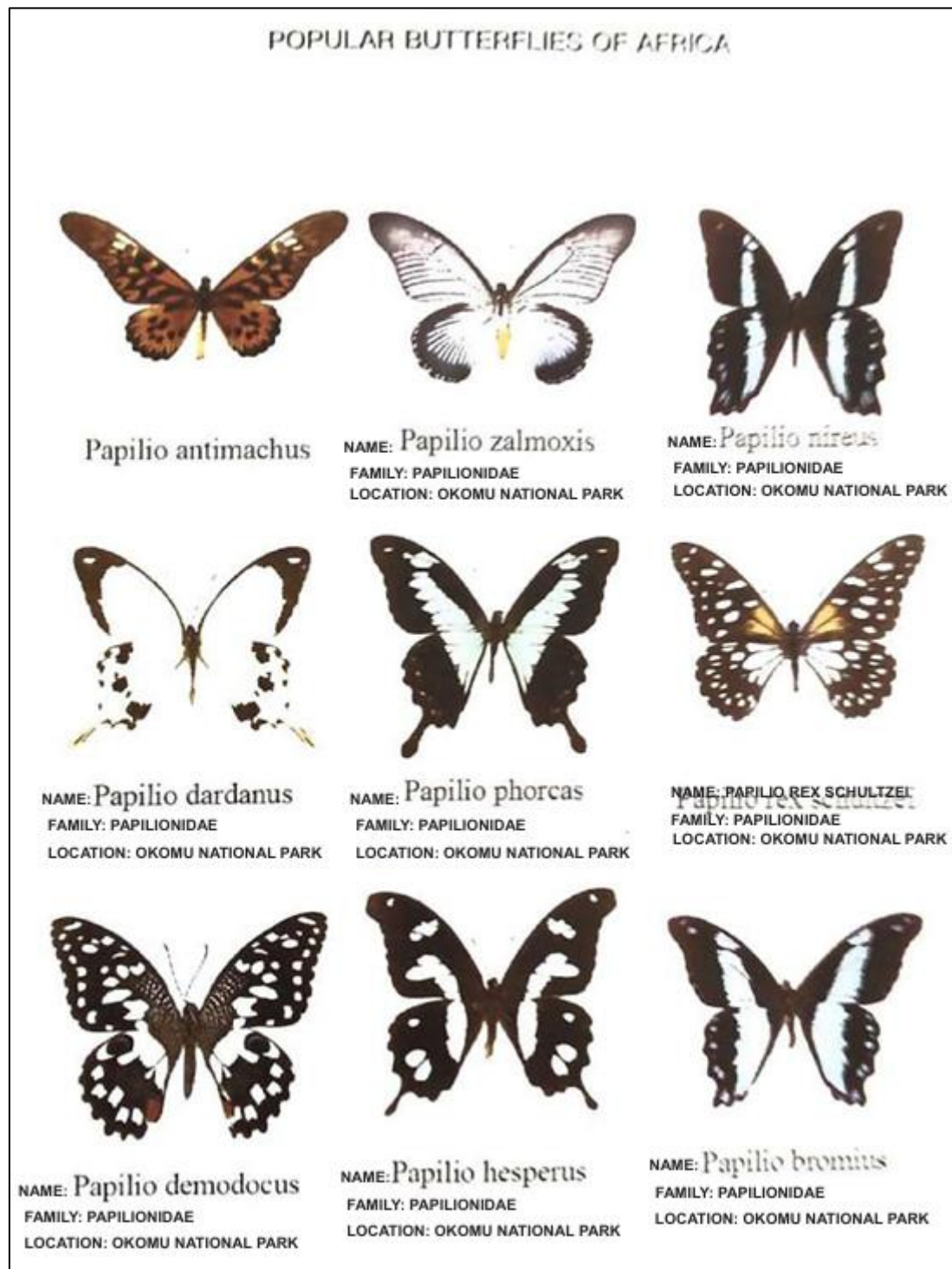
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: *Graphium angolanus baronis*

FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK





NAME: LEPTOSIA NINA
FAMILY: PIERIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: GENUS AMAURIS
FAMILY: PIERIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: OPSIPHANES CASSINA
FAMILY: PIERIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: GENUS OTHROEDA
FAMILY: LYCINIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: DIVANA DIVA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: ASOTA CARICAE
(TIGER MOTH) ASOTA
HELICONIA
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL
PARK



NAME: EUTHALIA MONINA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: PHYCIODES THAROS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL
PARK



NAME: CHARAXES BRUTUS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: PAPILO MENESTHEUS
FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: LIMENITIS POPULI
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: SUPHA ERYMANTHIS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: AMAURIS NIAVIUS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: BEBEARIA MARDANIA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: PRECIS ARCHESIA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: HYPOLIMNAS MISSIPUS (FM)
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: MYLOTHRIS APIAS
FAMILY: PIERIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: JUMONIA CYMODOCE
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



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LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: CHARAXES ETHEOCLES
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LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: MELANITIS LEDA
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NAME: NEPTIS HYLAS
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LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: CATHOSIA BIBLIS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK
NAME: ELYMNIOPSIS BAMMAKOO
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE



LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: LIMENITIS ARTEMIS (PEVINE SWALLOWTAIL)
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: ACRAEA HORTA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK
NAME: ACRAEA ABDERA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE



NAME: JUNONIA HEDONA (CHOCOLATE PANSY)
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: TANAECIA PELEA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: MYSCALIA ETHUSA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: MELANITIS PHEDIMA (EVENING BROWN)
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: PAPILIO DEMOLEUS
FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: PREPONA (NOREPA CHROMUS)
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: PAPILO NIREUS (FRONT VIEW)
FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: JULIA
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: PAPILO NIREUS
FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK

NAME: MORPHO HELENOR (BROKEN WINGS)



FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: SATURNIA PAVONIA (MOTH)
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: SALAMIS DUPREI
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: EUPHAEDRA THERMIS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: EUPHAEDRA THERMIS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PA



NAME: TIRUMALA SEPTENTRIONIS
(DARK BLUE TIGER)
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: HYPOLENIA ARTHEDOM
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: ARTERICA GALENE
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LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: SALAMI PARHASSUS
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LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: JUNONIA TEREAE
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LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: GRAPHIUM ARTHEUS
FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: GRAPHIUM POLICENE
FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE



NAME: CHLOSINE NYCTEIS
FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE
LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL

PARK



NAME: ACRAEA TERPSICORE

FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK

NAME: PIERIDAE

FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE



NAME: GAUDY COMMODORE

FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



PARK

NAME: CHARAXES JASIUS

FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL
PARK **NAME:** CALLIMORPHA
DOMINULA

**SCARLET MOTH AFRICAN
MONARCH**



NAME: ARIADNE MERIONE

FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK



NAME: CHARAXES JASIUS

FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL
PARK **NAME:** CALLIMORPHA
DOMINULA

**SCARLET MOTH AFRICAN
MONARCH**



NAME: CYMOTHOE HESIODOTUS

FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK

	 NAME: MELANCHROIA CHEPHISE (GEOMETER MOTHS) LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK
 NAME: BELENOIS AUROTA FAMILY: PIERIDAE LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK	 NAME: PAPILIO DARDANUS FAMILY: PAPILIONIDAE NAME: EUPTERA NEPTUNUS FAMILY: NYMPHALIDAE LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK

LOCATION: OKOMU NATIONAL PARK