

First record of *Heteraspis vittata* (Maulik, 1919) (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae: Cassidinae) from the Terai Region of Kumaun, Uttarakhand, India

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Abstract

We report the occurrence of *Heteraspis vittata* (Maulik, 1919) ^[8] (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae: Cassidinae) from Bazpur in the Terai region of Kumaun, Uttarakhand, India. The specimen was collected on 2 September 2025 during a pilot field survey (July–October 2025) and identified using the key in Maulik (1919) ^[7], with cross-verification against digital resources such as iNaturalist ^[3]. The specimen measured 8.1 mm in body length, corresponding closely with Maulik's original description. This constitutes the first faunistic record of *H. vittata* from Kumaun Terai, thereby extending the known distribution of the species within Uttarakhand.

Keywords: *Heteraspis vittata*, *Chrysomelidae*, Cassidinae, Kumaun Terai, Bazpur, Uttarakhand

Introduction

Kumaun Terai is an ecotone between the Gangetic plains and the Himalayan foothills. Comprising alluvial plains, sal-dominated forests, rich cultivated lands settlements, the Kumaun Terai is an area of immense biogeographical importance. Although the area harbours rich biodiversity, its insect fauna remains underexplored. The genus *Heteraspis* (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae: Cassidinae) includes several species distributed across the Oriental region, including India ^[4,7]. The group was historically placed under *Scelodonta* by Baly 1877 ^[1] and later revised by Borowiec (1999) ^[2] and Löbl & Smetana (2010) ^[6].

While several beetle genera have been reported from the Doon Valley ^[9], no documented evidence of *Heteraspis* occurrence is available from the Kumaun Terai. Here, we provide the first confirmed record of *H. vittata* from Bazpur in the Terai region of Kumaun division of Uttarakhand.

Materials and Methods

Pilot field surveys were conducted in Bazpur, Udham Singh Nagar district, Kumaun Terai, Uttarakhand to assess the potential for a broader insect biodiversity project in the area. Beetles were collected by sweep-netting and hand-picking from cultivated fields. The insect was observed on 2 September 2025 on a leaf of *Achyranthes* sp. Specimen was preserved in 70% ethanol and later pinned for morphological study. Identification was carried out using Maulik (1919) ^[7] and cross-checked against comparative images on iNaturalist ^[3].

Photographs were taken of the living specimen (geotagged), and of preserved specimens showing dorsal and ventral characters. The preserved specimen was deposited in the collection of the Department of Zoology, Government P. G. College, Bazpur, U. S. Nagar, Uttarakhand.

Results — Taxonomy

Order: Coleoptera Linnaeus, 1758 Family: Chrysomelidae Latreille, 1802 Subfamily: Cassidinae Gyllenhal, 1813 Genus: *Heteraspis* Chevrolat, 1837

Species: *Heteraspis vittata* (Maulik, 1919) — present record

Identification

Body oval, moderately convex, dorsally glabrous except for distinct pubescent bands; overall length 8.1 mm (measured from apex of clypeus to elytral apex). Head small, partly concealed beneath pronotum, with filiform antennae extending to the base of the thorax. Pronotum surface with close transverse striations, bearing three pale yellow pubescent bands, comprising one median and two lateral bands. Elytra broadly ovate, completely covering the abdomen, each with five longitudinal golden stripes (5+5), the innermost continuous with the pronotal bands and extending from base to apex. Legs metallic cupreous, femora robust, each with a distinct ventral tooth. Ventral surface metallic and moderately shining.

All diagnostic characters closely match the original description of *H. vittata* (then *Scelodonta vittata*) by Maulik (1919) ^[7]. The close agreement in body form, sculpture, coloration, pubescence, and body length strongly supports the identification as *H. vittata*, although further specialist confirmation is desirable.

Discussion

The occurrence of *H. vittata* in Bazpur, in the Terai region of Kumaun, extends the known distribution of this species within Uttarakhand. Earlier studies reported several beetle genera from the Doon Valley ^[8], but no report of *Heteraspis* is available. This new record highlights the faunal distinctiveness of the Terai ecosystem, which forms a transitional zone between the Indo-Gangetic plains and the Himalayan foothills.

As some *Heteraspis* species are known phytophages associated with cultivated and wild plants ^[5], further studies should investigate host-plant associations and potential agricultural significance in the Terai landscape.



Fig 1: Living geotagged specimen

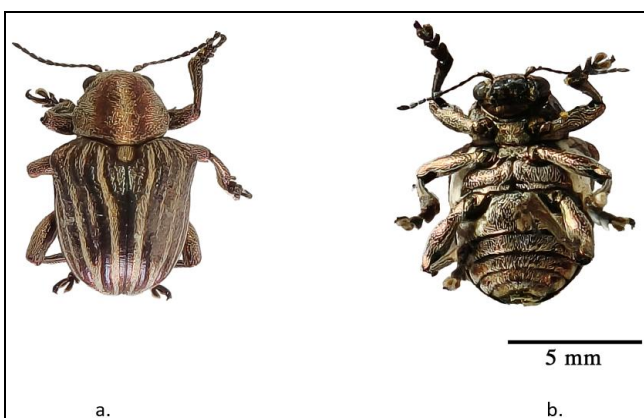


Fig 2: a. Dorsal view of preserved specimen showing pubescent bands, b. Ventral view showing femoral tooth

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