

Whoa!

We Brake

for Rekoa

by Jeffrey Glassberg



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1. Tiger-eye Hairstreak (*Rekoa meton*).
July 24, 2005. Near Chancala, Chiapas, Mexico.

2. Gold-bordered Hairstreak.
June 29, 2005. Lagos de Montebello, Chiapas, Mexico.

3. Tiger-eye Hairstreak (*Rekoa meton*) male.
Quinta Chilla, San Luis Potosi, Mexico.



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4. Tiger-eye Hairstreak (*Rekoa meton*) female.
Mexico City, Mexico.

In the jungle, the mighty jungle, the tiger leaps to sight; hush my darling, my pretty darling, Rekoa will delight and, Zulu songwriter controversies are soon forgotten when a tiger-eye hairstreak (*Rekoa meton*) looms large in your field of vision. Currently there are seven species of hairstreaks placed in the genus *Rekoa*. Three of the seven species have strayed to the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The unique and spectacular tiger-eye hairstreak (photos 1, 3, and 4) has yet to be spotted there. In addition to its captivating and unmistakable underside pattern, the topsides of males are opalescent violet while females are opalescent white. Due to their unique upperside mother-of-pearl coloration, when in flight they are one of the few hairstreaks that can be identified while driving a car. While, to my knowledge, one has not yet been found north of the Mexican states of San Luis Potosi in the east and Sinaloa in the west, it isn't impossible that one could appear in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Keep your tiger-eyes out for one!



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5. Marius Hairstreak.
July 19, 2003. Near Villahermosa, TAB, Mexico.

6. Zebina Haistreak.
July 19, 2003. Near Villahermosa, TAB, Mexico.

Gold-bordered Hairstreaks (photo 2) do stray on rare occasions to the Valley. Recently, one was seen at NABA Butterfly Park, the third record for the United States (see Hot Seens, pg. 42). Fresh individuals of this aptly named hairstreak are easy to recognize, having a golden border on the HW. This species is widespread in Mexico (and throughout the Neotropics) but is usually encountered in small groups, rather than in abundance.

Two other species of *Rekoa* have been found in the United States, Marius Hairstreak (photo 5), and smudged hairstreak (*Rekoa stagira*, photo 7)(see pg 44 for first U.S. record). These are very similar to each other, and to zebina hairstreak (*Rekoa zebina*, photo 6) in appearance. All have at least some red-orange at the base of the FW costa and gray eyes. They all have weak or absent cell-end bars and strong postmedian bands of black and white dashes. All three also usually have a gold-tinge to the FW fringe. The remaining two *Rekoa* species, *Rekoa malina* and *Rekoa bourkei* are found in southeastern Brazil and the Antilles respectively.

Another similar species, Strophius Hairstreak (photo 8) is more distantly related. It also has been reported from the United States and can be easily distinguished from *Rekoa* by its black eyes and by the faint or absent (instead of strong) white on the outer side of the FW postmedian band.



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