Summary: During the present investigation a fern genus *Aleuritopteris* Fée was studied from northern Western Ghats, India. About four species of *Aleuritopteris* were collected, of which *A. rufa* (D. Don) Ching was collected for the first time and reported as a new record for Western Ghats. Notes on the species description, range and a phytogeographical note of the species are given along with a key to the species.

*Aleuritopteris* Fée, previously treated as *Cheilanthes* subg. *Aleuritopteris* (Fée) W. C. Shieh, and all the species, except *A. stenochlamys* Ching ex S. K. Wu, have names in the genus *Cheilanthes*. However, the name *Aleuritopteris* has been recognized by Ching and Wu (1983) and other Chinese pteridologists (Fraser-Jenkins and Dulawat 2009). It is a distinct isolated genus of cheilanthoid ferns in the family *Pteridaceae*, commonly known as “floury bread or silver ferns” due to the presence of white, or sometimes yellow flavonoid farina beneath the lamina. The species are usually well-marked and readily distinguishable by their stipe-scales (bicolorous or concolorous) and their distribution on the axes, though most were at one time referred to the African and Arabian species. Based on molecular data, the genus comprises 70 species out of which India has 20 species (Khullar 1994, Fraser-Jenkins 1997, 2008). During the present investigation four species were collected. Amongst these *Aleuritopteris rufa* (D. Don) Ching was recognized for the first time and reported as a new distributional record for Western Ghats, India.

Materials and Methods

Field visits were carried out from June 2010 to December 2013 for the collection of *Aleuritopteris* species from Northern Western Ghats. It includes western parts of Maharashtra, Northern part of Uttar Kannada district of Karnataka state and Goa states (Fig. 1). The collected specimens are preserved in Herbarium, Department of Botany, Shivaji University, Kolhapur and identified by using the floristic accounts of Beddome (1884), Blatter and d’Almedia (1922), Dixit (1984), Manickam and Irudayaraj (1992) and Fraser-Jenkins (2008).

Taxonomic treatment

Key to the species of *Aleuritopteris*

1a. Fronds densely covered with dark brown hairs .............................................. 4.
1b. Fronds glabrous ................................................................. 2
2a. Lamina deltoid or triangular ..... 2. *A. anceps*  
2b. Lamina oblong- or ovate-lanceolate .......... 3
3a. Rachis covered with hairs throughout ............ 1. *A. albomarginata*  
3b. Rachis glabrous except for the part of stipe  


*Aleuritopteris subrufa* (Baker) Ching in
rounded to acuminate; pinnae with 5–8 lobes in pairs, herbaceous or leathery, green, covered with multicellular hairs and white powdery wax on the lower side, opposite or subopposite, sessile, basal lobe acroscopic, middle pinnae oblong, round at apex, adnate at base, lower larger pinnule is oblong, subdeltoid, falcate; vein dichotomously branched ends freely, reaches towards the margin; vein and veinlets are covered with hairs; sori marginal to submarginal, along veinlets, protected by reflexed margin, which ruptures at maturity, appearing more or less continuous; spores 23–28 μm in diameter, round, somewhat triangular to globose, exine much folded, irregular.

Locality: Maharashtra – Satara: Kas, Panchgani and Medha Ghat.

Conservation status: Aleuritopteris rufa (D. Don.) Ching was collected from Kas, Panchgani and Medha Ghat regions situated in Northern Western Ghats of India. A population of about 100 individuals was found per locality. The area of occupancy is 0.5–1 km² per locality. Hence, it is assessed as critically endangered (CE) species following the IUCN categories and criteria (IUCN 2001).

Specimens examined: INDIA. Maharashtra, Satara Dt., Panchgani, S. M. Patil (SUK 20035); Panchgani, S. M. Patil (BLAT 0001).

Authors are very much thankful to the Head, Department of Botany, Shivaji University, Kolhapur for providing laboratory facilities.

References

S. Patil, M. Dongare: インド・北部ウエスタンガーツ山脈のヒメウラジロ属（イノモトソウ科）
インド・北部ウエスタンガーツ山脈のヒメウラジロ属（イノモトソウ科）を調べたところ、4種が得られた。このうち、Aleuritopteris rufa (D. Don) Ching はウエスタンガーツ山脈での新記録である。ここではこれら4種の検索表、各種の異名、記載、分布域などを示した。