



The flea beetle genus *Lanka* (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) in India with descriptions of three new species and notes on the identity of the *pollu* beetle infesting black pepper, *Piper nigrum*

K. D. PRATHAPAN¹ & C. A. VIRAKTAMATH²

¹ Department of Entomology, Kerala Agricultural University, Vellayani P.O., Trivandrum - 695 522, Kerala, India; e-mail: prathapankd@gmail.com

² Department of Entomology, University of Agricultural Sciences, GKVK P.O., Bangalore - 560 065, India; email: chandrashekhara.viraktamath@gmail.com

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Abstract

The flea beetle genus *Lanka* Maulik (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae: Alticinae) is redefined with key, descriptions, illustrations and host plant information of three new species, *Lanka aruna*, *L. ramakrishnai* (correct name for the pepper *pollu* flea beetle) and *L. sahyadriensis* from India, including the pepper ‘*pollu*’ beetle, hitherto misidentified as *Longitarsus nigripennis* (Motschulsky). A lectotype is designated for *L. nigripennis*.

Key words: Chrysomelidae, *Lanka*, Alticinae, India, new species, *Piper*, *Longitarsus nigripennis*

Introduction

The flea beetle genus *Lanka* Maulik is distributed in the Oriental Region and some adjoining areas of the Palaearctic region. Seventeen species of *Lanka* have so far been described from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, the Solomon Islands and Yunnan in China. Though its occurrence was known (Premkumar and Nair, 1987), no species has so far been described from India.

In this paper, the genus *Lanka* is redefined, and three new species from India are described and illustrated. One of the new species described here is the pepper flea beetle, commonly known as the “*pollu*” beetle, until now misidentified as *Longitarsus nigripennis* (Motschulsky).