



Review of *Ruppellia* Wiedemann, 1830 (Diptera: Therevidae) in the Middle East

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Abstract

The Egyptian fauna of the genus *Ruppellia* Wiedemann, 1830 is revised based on new material from Egypt, Israel, Oman, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Yemen and on reexamination of the types in Egyptian collections. We recognize two distinct species: *Ruppellia semiflava* Wiedemann, 1830 and *Ruppellia thoracica* (Macquart, 1840). *Ruppellia pallida* Kröber, 1929 and *Ruppellia apicalis* Kröber, 1929 (new name = *subapicalis* Lyneborg, 1983) are synonymized with *R. semiflava* based on examination of the female type specimen of the former and the male type specimen of the latter species. Also, *Thereva nuda* Loew, 1856 is removed from synonymy with *R. semiflava* and placed as a new synonym to *R. thoracica*. *Cataclinoneurum alexandrinum* (Becker, 1912) is confirmed as a synonym to *R. thoracica* after we obtained pictures of the types. *Ruppellia semiflava* is recorded in Oman, UAE and Yemen for the first time. *Ruppellia* is redefined based on the number of dorsocentral setae. Illustrations, key, specimens examined and distributions are given for each species, along with color images of type specimens.

Key words: *Ruppellia*, Palaearctic, Afrotropical, Egypt

Introduction

The stiletto fly subfamily Phycinae is distributed worldwide (with the exception of Australia and Antarctica) and comprises 14 genera with over 130 described and undescribed species (Lyneborg 1983, Hauser and Webb 2007). In the Palaearctic Region, Phycinae currently include about 40 species belonging to seven genera [*Acathrito* Lyneborg, *Actorthia* Kröber, *Efflatouniella* Kröber, *Yemenia* Kocak & Kemal, *Phycus* Walker, *Ruppellia* Wiedemann, *Salentia* Costa] according to the last published catalog of Lyneborg (1989a). Lyneborg (2002) added one new species *Phycus lacteipennis* from Morocco while Mohammad and Badrawy (2011) recently added two new species of *Efflatouniella* from Egypt.

The genus *Ruppellia* was described by Wiedemann (1830) based on a female specimen collected from Abyssinia (Egypt). Lyneborg (1983) published a redescription of *Ruppellia* and provided a list of the six described species. Members of this genus are typically characterized as small to medium flies, easily recognized by their wing venation. Most species are black to orange-brown; especially females can be completely orange-red. The synapomorphic characters of the genus are: (a) mesonotum more or less hump-backed; (b) vein R_4 is parallel to R_5 apically (c) vein C ending at M_2 ; (d) CuA_1+M_3 abbreviated and does not reach wing margin; (e) gonocoxites fused anteriorly with hypandrium and with each other and carry no parameral process; (f) distiphallus forms a strong upright and nearly straight cone, the remaining elements of aedeagus being greatly reduced (Lyneborg 1983, 1989b).

Ruppellia is distributed in the African part of the Palaearctic Region, extending from Tunisia to Iran and Central Asia. The desert and semi-desert areas of the north-eastern part of the Afrotropical region (Gebel Elba) and Madagascar contain several species, the taxonomy of which is in a poor state due to insufficient material (Lyneborg 1983, 1989b)

According to the list of Steyskal and El-Bialy (1967), in Egypt this genus was represented by five species [*Ruppellia apicalis* Kröber, *R. pallida* Kröber, *R. robusta* Kröber, *R. semiflava* Wiedemann & *R. thoracica* (Macquart)] (Kröber 1924, 1929). Lyneborg (1983) erected a new genus *Acathrito* and transferred *R. robusta* to this genus. Also, he proposed the replacement name *R. subapicalis* for *R. apicalis* Kröber due to the preoccupied name by *Salentia apicalis* Becker in Becker & Stein, 1913 [junior secondary homonym].