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A review of the genus *Tabanus* Linnaeus, 1758 (Diptera: Tabanidae) from Egypt

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Abstract

The Egyptian fauna of the genus *Tabanus* Linnaeus is reviewed. Only seventeen species are recognized instead of the previous 21. This is because six species have been removed as doubtful records, and an additional two species have been added (*T. leucostomus* Loew, 1858 (new record) and *T. arenivagus* Austen, 1920). A key to Egyptian species of *Tabanus* is included together with illustrations. Specimens examined and distributions are given for each species. The status of the six species doubtful to occur in Egypt is discussed.

Key words: horse flies, new record, *Atylotus*, distribution

Introduction

Tabanidae (horse flies, deer flies and clegs) are a cosmopolitan family belonging to the superfamily Tabanoidea, suborder Brachycera, and comprising about 4400 species within 144 genera (Thompson & Pape 2010). It is one of the largest groups of blood-sucking pests that attack domestic and large wild animals as well as humans (Altunsoy & Kiliç 2012).

The Tabanini is a cosmopolitan tribe of the subfamily Tabaninae, comprising about 1700 species worldwide (Thompson & Pape 2010) and is characterized by the following features: antennae with a distinct dorsal tooth on basal plate; wings never maculated but sometimes infuscated, and basicosta setulose (Chvála *et al.* 1972).

The genus *Tabanus* Linnaeus comprises approximately 1340 valid species worldwide (Thompson & Pape 2010) and is characterized by the distinct frontal calli in females with the lower callus filling at least 3/4 width of frons, R_4 with or without an appendix, and basicosta densely and entirely covered with dark hairs.

In Egypt, the family Tabanidae was studied early by Kröber (1925), who recorded ten species of *Tabanus*. Efflatoun (1930) published a monograph of Egyptian Tabanidae with eight species of *Tabanus*, describing *Tabanus separatus* as a new species. He also listed species doubtful to occur in Egypt at the end of his monograph including: *Tabanus tinctus* Walker, 1850; *T. ptolemaeanus* Szilády, 1923; *T. siccus* Walker, 1850; *T. uncinatus* Loew, 1856; and *T. unifasciatus* Loew, 1858. Subsequently, Steyskal and El-Bialy (1967) listed 21 Egyptian species of *Tabanus*, including 13 species recorded only from the literature. Recently, Ahmed (1991) studied the blood-sucking flies (excluding mosquitoes), including Tabanidae, and recorded only eight species of the genus in Egypt (*T. albifacies* Loew, 1856; *T. autumnalis* Linnaeus, 1761; *T. gratus* Loew, 1858; *T. lunatus* Fabricius, 1794; *T. mordax* Austen, 1911; *T. separatus* Efflatoun, 1930; *T. sufis* Jaenicke, 1867; and *T. taeniola* Palisot de Beauvois, 1806).

More recently, Müller *et al.* (2012) presented an annotated checklist of the horse flies resulting from a 20-year survey of the Sinai Peninsula. They listed 12 species of *Tabanus* (*T. accensus* Austen, 1920; *T. albifacies*; *T. arenivagus* Austen, 1920; *T. autumnalis*; *T. gratus*; *T. leleani* Austen, 1920; *T. lunatus*; *T. mordax*; *T. rupinae* Austen, 1920; *T. separatus*; *T. sufis* and *T. taeniola*) and three doubtful species (*T. terminalis* Walker, 1871 and *T. unifasciatus* Loew and *T. politus* (Walker, 1871)).

Although there are many studies in different parts of the world that deal with the taxonomy and distribution of horse flies, the group is poorly known for the Middle East (Al Dhafer *et al.* 2009). No comprehensive work on the