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Taxonomic notes and new records of the genus *Sphingonaepiopsis* Wallengren, 1858 (Lepidoptera: Sphingidae) in Iran

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Abstract

The taxonomy, morphology, biology and distribution of *Sphingonaepiopsis gorgoniades* (Hübner [1819]) and *S. nana* (Walker 1856) are reviewed. The validity of subspecies within *S. gorgoniades* is re-examined and it is concluded that there is no justification for their continued recognition. *Sphingonaepiopsis gorgoniades pfeifferi* Zerny 1933 is therefore confirmed as a synonym of *S. gorgoniades*. Records of *Sphingonaepiopsis* in the collection of the Hayk Mirzayans Insect Museum (HMIM), Tehran, Iran, are collated and mapped, and the first confirmed occurrence reported of the Afrotropical *S. nana* in mainland southwest Asia, an increase in the known range of the species. Global distribution maps are provided for both species.

Key words: Taxonomy, *Sphingonaepiopsis*, Iran

Introduction

During a survey of the lepidopteran family Sphingidae (hawkmoths) in the Hayk Mirzayans Insect Museum (HMIM), the largest insect museum of Iran, the second author (RZ) discovered specimens of the genus *Sphingonaepiopsis* collected from different parts of Iran. Most proved to be *Sphingonaepiopsis gorgoniades* (Hübner [1819]), hitherto the only species recorded from Iran. However, two specimens from the south of the country differed in wing colour and pattern, and dissection of the male genitalia demonstrated they belonged to the Afrotropical species, *Sphingonaepiopsis nana* (Walker 1856). These specimens are the first confirmed records of this species from mainland southwest Asia and represent an extension to the known range of the species.

In this paper, we review the taxonomy, morphology, biology and distribution of *S. gorgoniades* and *S. nana*, including diagnostic features for identification, summaries of data on larval host plants and distribution maps. We also re-examine the validity of subspecies within *S. gorgoniades* and conclude there is no justification for their continued recognition.

Sphingonaepiopsis Wallengren, 1858

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Type species: *Sphingonaepiopsis gracilipes* Wallengren, 1858, by original designation.

The genus *Sphingonaepiopsis* comprises some of the smallest of all hawkmoths, with wingspans of 25–35 mm. There are currently seven recognized species (Kitching & Cadiou 2000), distributed throughout the Old

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