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A new species of Criocerinae (Chrysomelidae) from New Caledonia: *Oulema* (*Oulema*) *taophiloides* sp. nov.

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Abstract

The first New Caledonian record for the genus *Oulema* Des Gozis (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) is reported here with the description of a new species: *Oulema taophiloides* **sp. nov.**

Key words: New Caledonia, new species, Oulema, Criocerinae, Chrysomelidae, taxonomy

Introduction

In the course of my current phylogenetic and evolutionary research on New Caledonian Chrysomelidae, I received several samples collected by Kjell Arne Johanson and colleagues (Naturhistoriska riksmuseet, Stockholm, Sweden) in their own entomological campaigns in this archipelago. The thorough entomological prospection by these entomologists made it possible to make very interesting discoveries among their samples. Among them, stand out a small series of Criocerinae beetles that motivate this work. The fauna of New Caledonia is very poor in representatives of this leaf beetle subfamily. Baly (1860) accompanied the description of his new Criocerinae genus *Stethopachys* with the description of two species, one of them, *S. formosa* Baly, 1860 from Australia, and the other, *S. javeti* Baly, 1860 from New Caledonia. One year later, Montrouzier (1861) described three New Caledonian species under *Lema* Fabricius, 1798. One of them, *L. bipustulata* Montrouzier, 1861 was a junior homonym of a species also described by Montrouzier (1855) from Muyua Island (also known as Woodlark, in Papua New Guinea), which was recognized as not conspecific, not even congeneric with the neocaledonian taxon (Fauvel 1907; Heinze 1930). Fauvel (1907) could not study the type or any other material of *L. bipustulata* Montrouzier, 1861, however he ranked it with *Stethopachys*, possibly following Gemminger and Harold's (1874) earlier arrangement, disambiguating the problem of homonymy. This author also synonymized the other two taxa by Montrouzier—*L. bletiae* Montrouzier, 1861 and *L. assimilis* Montrouzier, 1861—with Baly's *S. javeti*, an opinion later subscribed by Heinze (1930) in the case of *L. assimilis*. Thus, the Criocerinae fauna of New Caledonia is currently represented by two species belonging in the genus *Stethopachys*, namely *S. javeti* and *S. bipustulata* (Fauvel 1907; Heinze 1930; Monrós 1960; Gressitt 1965). Gressitt (1965) actually mentions by number three species in New Caledonia, but considering the abovementioned work by Fauvel (1907) and Heinze (1930), the third species is not justified. With eleven species, this genus is more diverse in the Papuan subregion, and believed the source of the New Caledonian species (Gressitt 1965). The third species of Criocerinae found in the island and described here as new to science is somehow an oddity, since it belongs to a very different group, the genus *Oulema* Des Gozis, 1886. This genus comprises some 100 species described mostly from Africa, although it is distributed worldwide and relatively well known in the Holarctic region (Monrós 1960; Wellso and Hoxie 1988), with only a few species in New Guinea and Australia (Gressitt 1965; Matthews and Reid 2002).

The genus can be recognized from other Criocerinae by its connate claws and a weak prebasal constriction on the pronotum, but chiefly by the disposition of frontal sulci on the head forming an obtuse angle above antennal insertions (Monrós 1960; Gressitt and Kimoto 1961). The latter is also found in some *Lema*, but these two genera can be distinguished by more pronounced lateral constrictions placed medially or postmedially on the pronotum of

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