



A review of the Hangingflies (Mecoptera: Bittacidae) of South Asia with the description of a new species of *Bittacus* from Nepal

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Abstract

A new species of hangingfly, *Bittacus coheri*, is described from the eastern Terai of Nepal. The male of this species differs from all other known south Asian hangingflies by the presence of a bifurcated flap-like structure between the male epiandrial lobes of tergum 9. *Bittacus taraienseis* Penny is placed in synonymy with *B. indicus* Walker, leaving south Asia (Iran to Bangladesh) with six species of hangingflies: at least two with West African affinities and at least two with oriental affinities. Additional records of *B. nodosus* and *B. henryi* are given.

Key words: *Bittacus*, India, Mecoptera, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Terai

Introduction

Hangingflies have been described from North and South America, southern Europe, Africa, Australia, and Asia, with 18 genera (Tan and Hua, 2009) and over 185 described species. Hangingflies occur within Asia from south-eastern Russia to southeast Asia to the Indian subcontinent. Six species of hangingflies (Bittacidae), all of the genus *Bittacus* Latreille, 1805, are currently known to occur in the south Asian region. One species is known from Pakistan and northwest India, two species from Sri Lanka and southeastern India, one species in mountainous northeastern India, and one species in north-central India. (Chandra 2004; Esben-Petersen 1921; Penny 1969; Rust & Byers 1976). No hangingflies have yet been described from Iran, Afghanistan, Bhutan, or Bangladesh. Several south Asian species appear to have affinities with West African species and at least one species appears to have affinities with Chinese species. Males of three of the six south Asian species are undescribed, creating taxonomic uncertainty. Taxonomic, seasonal, and distribution data is scant for this large region, so reports from additional collections are greatly valued. Recently, a small collection of hangingflies from Nepal was graciously donated to the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (FSCA) by Ed Coher, which contained a male of a species previously only known from a lone female, and males of an unusual undescribed species. The new species is described, a previously described species is placed in synonymy, and additional distributional and seasonal data from these specimens are summarized.

Bittacus coheri Bicha, sp. n.

Figs. 1–4

Diagnosis. This new species is unique among all described Bittacidae by presence of a dorsal bifurcated flap-like structure between the male epiandrial lobes of tergum 9. Additionally, the wing subcostal crossvein is midway between the level of the first fork of the radial sector and the Cu_2 terminus. The 1A extends two-thirds the distance from the origin of the radial sector to the first fork of the radial sector.

Type material examined. Holotype male and 1 paratype male, Nepal, Amlekhganj (in the Eastern Terai), 520m at light, 6 August 1957; allotype female, same locality, 21 July 1957. Holotype and allotype deposited in California Academy of Science (CAS), San Francisco, California, and 1 male paratype in the FSCA, Gainesville, Flor-