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Identity of Baker's species described in the Oriental leafhopper genus *Pythamus* (Hemiptera: Cicadellidae) with description of a new genus

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Abstract

Baker's (1915) species described in the Oriental leafhopper genus *Pythamus* Melichar are revised. One species, *Pythamus melichari* Baker 1915, is placed in a new genus, *Pythochandra* Wei & Webb, **gen. n.**. The four varieties of *P. melichari* described by Baker (1915, 1923) (*borneensis*, *bilobatus*, *decoratus* and *singaporensis*) are elevated to species level and placed in the new genus **stat. n., comb. n.**. All species are briefly described and a key is provided for their separation. Two other species, *Pythamus productus* Baker and *P. decoratus* Baker, known only from females, are retained in *Pythamus* pending further studies.

Key words: Auchenorrhyncha, morphology, Indo-Malayan region

Introduction

The Indo-Malayan region has been recognised as a centre of diversity for many Cicadellidae groups with very high proportion of endemic taxa, including Cicadellinae (Young, 1968, 1986), Coelidiinae (Nielson, 1975, 1979, 1982) and Stegelytrini (Wei *et al.*, 2010, 2012), etc. Recent published work on Evacanthinae (e.g., Dietrich, 2011; Wang *et al.*, 2012) and our own studies also indicates a large number of endemic taxa of this group in this area. This subfamily was recently revised to also include Nirvanini (Dietrich, 2004) which together with Evacanthini were treated by Baker (1915, 1923) for the Pacific region. Baker's Nirvanini were revised by Viraktamath & Wesley (1988), and here we treat Baker's species placed in *Pythamus* Melichar (Evacanthini).

Melichar (1903) described the leafhopper genus *Pythamus* with type species *Pythamus dealbatus* Melichar from Sri Lanka. Subsequently, three more species (*P. melichari* Baker, 1915, *P. productus* Baker, 1923 and *P. decoratus* Baker, 1923) were added from the Indo-Malayan region. Baker (1923: 366) noted that specimens of *P. melichari* on different islands showed slight differences which he considered to be subspecific. These forms of *P. melichari* were named as *mindanaensis* Baker 1915, *bilobatus* Baker 1923, *borneensis* Baker 1923 and *singaporensis* Baker 1923. More recently, the species of *Pythamus* from the Indian subcontinent (including *P. dealbatus*) were treated by Viraktamath & Webb (2007). In the present study we re-examine Baker's species and find sufficient differences in the male genitalia of the subspecies of *P. melichari* to raise them to species level. These species and *P. melichari* are placed in a new genus, and we figure their male genitalia for the first time. Only a brief description of each species is given as more detailed information can be found in the original descriptions. The two other *Pythamus* species described by Baker (*P. productus* and *P. decoratus*), known only from females, are tentatively retained in *Pythamus* until associated males can be found. They differ from *Pythochandra* **gen. n.** in having the subocellar carina barely distinguishable from the transverse striations below the supraocellar carina.

Species of uncertain placement

Generic placement and identification of the following two species described by Baker in *Pythamus* awaits the study of associated males. Externally they are similar to the new genus but the medial swollen area of the vertex on each side of the medial carina is more central as in *Pythamus*, the subocellar carina on the face is absent but with a few transverse striations on each side of the midline dorsally on the postclypeus and the thorax and forewings are without punctations.

Pythamus decoratus Baker, 1923

(Fig. 1F)

Pythamus decoratus Baker, 1923: 365–366; pl. 2, fig. 12.

Material examined: Lectotype ♀ (here designated, Fig. 1F): “W. Borneo, Mowong, F. Muir, Sept., 1907” (NMNH). In addition to Baker’s determination label the specimen bears a label with the words “Holotype probably” in unknown hand.

Distribution. W. Borneo

Remarks. This species was originally described from an unknown number of females from ‘West Borneo, Mowong (Muir)’. It can be distinguished from other species of the genus by its pronounced dorsal yellow markings and moderately long head with non-lamellate medial carina (Fig. 1F).

Pythamus productus Baker, 1923

(Fig. 1G)

Pythamus productus Baker, 1923: 364–365; pl. 2, fig. 11.

Material examined. Lectotype ♀ (here designated, Fig. 1G): Malay Peninsular, “Penang Island, Baker” (NMNH). In addition to Baker’s determination label the specimen bears a label with the words “Holotype probably” in unknown hand.

Distribution. Malaysia: Malay Peninsular (Penang Island).

Remarks. This species was originally described from an unknown number of females from ‘Straits Settlements, Penang Island (Baker)’. It can be distinguished from other species of the genus by its paler dorsum and long vertex with high medial lamellate carina (Fig. 1G).

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