

Revision of the family Meenoplidae (Fulgoroidea): problems and progress

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Of the twenty families of the Fulgoroidea currently recognised, the Meenoplidae is one of the smallest, with around 100 described species. The family is confined to the Old World and most species are found in the tropical and subtropical regions.

Some preliminary information on the geographical variation in male genitalia in the most common and widespread species *Nisia nervosa* (MOTSCH.) was given at the previous (4th) Auchenorrhyncha workshop in Finland (WILSON, 1981). It was intended that the analysis of geographical variation would be carried out in conjunction with a revision of the family.

There are considerable advantages in studying an "entire" family, especially from the phylogenetic and zoogeographic standpoint. As far as fulgoroid families are concerned the Meenoplidae is well defined, recognised by the distinctly "granulate" claval veins of the forewing coupled with a long final segment to the rostrum among other characters. The term "granulate" for the appearance of the claval veins is actually misleading, SEM study has shown that the granulations are in fact sensilla. Similar sensilla are present on the inside margins of the prominent lateral carinae of the face.

From a practical standpoint also, the current small size of the family with only 106 species in 9 genera make it a good one to attempt to monograph over a reasonably short time. However, it is not without its taxonomic problems. MUIR (1927) stated that Dr. E. BERGROTH was revising the family at the time of his death, and went on to say "... the few genera placed in this family are closely allied and the species mostly inadequately described". The situation has hardly improved since 1927. Over twice as many species are now known compared with 1927, but no new genera have been described and few "older" species have been adequately redescribed. It has proved difficult to assign many apparently undescribed species to present genera and in addition it now appears that some generic synonymy is necessary (even with only 9 genera!). Some of the larger existing genera consist of a number of species groups which represent good new genera. As with almost all groups under revision, study reveals there to be large numbers of undescribed species. In the case of Meenoplidae a detailed study of African specimens shows at least a 50% increase in species. A similar number of undescribed species is expected from the Oriental and Pacific faunas.

Due to the taxonomic problems in the group I consider it ill advised to describe further new species until a thorough assessment of generic concepts in the family has been carried out. This reassessment, together with the redescription of some previously described species is now being carried out and I hope will be able to be completed in a fairly short time.

MUIR, F. 1927. *New species of African Meenoplidae (Fulgoroidea, Homoptera)*. Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist., Ser. 9, vol. XIX, 197-208.

WILSON, M. R. 1981. *Geographical variation in Nisia nervosa (MOTSCH.) (Fulgoroidea, Meenoplidae): A preliminary note*. Acta Entomol. Fenn. 38: 53.

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