



Descriptions of eight new species of *Phaelota* (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) with a new generic synonymy and a key to species of Indian subcontinent

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Abstract

Six new species of *Phaelota* Jacoby from India viz. *P. assamensis*, *P. kottigehara*, *P. maculipennis*, *P. mauliki*, *P. saluki*, and *P. viridipennis* and two new species from Sri Lanka viz. *P. ogloblini* and *P. schereri* are described and illustrated. *Thrylaea* Jacoby is treated as a new junior synonym of *Phaelota*. A lectotype for *Phaelota variabilis* (Jacoby) is designated and the species is removed from the synonyms of *P. flavipennis* (Motschulsky). The consequences of loss of flight on host plant selection in *Phaelota* are discussed and a key to the species of the Indian subcontinent is provided.

Key words: Chrysomelidae, *Phaelota*, *Thrylaea*, new synonym, new species, Indian subcontinent, apterism, host plant selection

Introduction

Phaelota, a flea beetle genus described by Jacoby (1887) from Sri Lanka, was recently revised with descriptions of three new species from south India (Prathapan and Viraktamath, 2004). Six new species of *Phaelota* from India and two new species from Sri Lanka are described here, a new generic synonymy is recognized and a key to the species of *Phaelota* of the Indian subcontinent is provided. Species of this genus were reported to feed on ferns (Prathapan and Viraktamath, 2004). Most of the material studied here was collected by the authors in southern India and this provides new insights into the trophic selections of the genus with respect to the ability to fly. With this contribution, the number of known species of *Phaelota* has become 16, including *P. unicolor* (Chen) from the Philippines and *P. kerzhneri* Prathapan and Konstantinov from Borneo.

The descriptive terminology follows Konstantinov (1998). The holotypes are deposited in the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC (USNM). Other specimens used in this study are deposited in the following collections: National Pusa Collection, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi (NPC), Natural History Museum, London (BMNH), Natural History Museum, Basel, Switzerland (NHMB), University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore (UASB), and the personal collection of the first author (PKDC).

Genus *Phaelota* Jacoby

Phaelota Jacoby, 1887: 94 (Type species: *Phaelota semifasciata* Jacoby, 1887, Sri Lanka, by monotypy); Maulik, 1926: 176; Chen, 1936: 659; Heikertinger and Csiki, 1940: 511; Scherer, 1969: 8, 18, 218; Seeno and Wilcox, 1982: 144; Prathapan and Viraktamath, 2004: 1–18.