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Nomenclatural status of the ‘pocketknife fly’: *Stomoxoides* Schaeffer, 1766 (Diptera: Conopidae)

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Abstract

The nomenclatural status of the genus *Stomoxoides* Schaeffer, 1766 is discussed and a timeline of usage is given. The name is shown to be available and date from Schaeffer’s 1766 work, and by invoking Article 70.3 of the ICZN Code, the type species of *Stomoxoides* is fixed as *Conops ferrugineus* Linnaeus, 1761, misidentified as *Conops testacea* Linnaeus, 1767 in the fixation by subsequent monotypy as proposed by Linnaeus in 1767. *Stomoxoides* is thereby synonymous with *Sicus* Scopoli, 1763 as originally proposed by Yeats in 1773.

Key words: Nomenclature, taxonomy, *Sicus*, Scopoli

Introduction

Some previous workers (e.g., Bezzi 1908, Coquillett 1910) have treated *Stomoxoides* Schaeffer, 1766 as synonymous with *Myopa* Fabricius, 1775. However, if this synonymy were accepted, it would threaten the long-established conopid name *Myopa* since *Stomoxoides* has priority and *Myopa* would become a junior synonym of the little-used older name. Other authors have considered *Stomoxoides* Schaeffer, 1766 as unavailable (e.g., Thompson 1997) by arguing that the work is not binominal. However, this would imply that *Stomoxoides* should take authorship from a later day, as this name has been considered available and valid by several subsequent workers. This study examines the nomenclatural status of *Stomoxoides* and shows that it is available and synonymous with *Sicus* Scopoli, 1763 as originally proposed by Yeats (1773). An annotated cresonymy (timeline of usage) is provided.

Historical outline

The history of *Stomoxoides* Schaeffer is complex. It was originally proposed in Schaeffer (1766a: plate 120) (see Figs. 2, 3) without any named species (i.e., the illustrated fly was not identified to species, only to genus). No species at all were given scientific names in Schaeffer (1766a), only orders and genus-group taxa.

Jacob Christian Schaeffer (1718–1790) (Fig. 1) [his name is correctly spelled as “Schäffer”, but we follow the more common Latinized spelling of his name, which appears in many of his works] was born in Querfurt near Halle in Saxony-Anhalt. He received no formal education in either science or medicine but instead, and like many of that era who became some of the finest “scientists” before that word even existed, studied Latin and theology. His studies were at the French School of Latin in Halle and the University of Halle. Schaeffer was initially a private tutor in the town of Regensburg, but in 1741 became pastor of an evangelical church there and, eventually in 1779, its superintendent (Fryer 2008).

Although Schaeffer’s vocation was theological, his interests in science were varied and many and his scientific reputation was lauded by colleagues internationally. He made many observations on insects, one of which was on

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