A second New World hoverfly, *Toxomerus floralis* (Fabricius) (Diptera: Syrphidae), recorded from the Old World, with description of larval pollen-feeding ecology

KURT JORDAENS1,2,6, GEORG GOERGEN3, ASHLEY H. KIRK-SPRIGGS4, AUDREY VOKAER1, THIERRY BACKELJAU2,5 & MARC DE MEYER1

1Royal Museum for Central Africa, Invertebrates Section and JEMU, Leuvensesteenweg 13, B-3080 Tervuren, BELGIUM. E-mail: kurt.jordaens@africamuseum.be; marc.de.meyer@africamuseum.be

2University of Antwerp, Evolutionary Ecology Group, Groenenborgerlaan 171, B-2020 Antwerp, BELGIUM

3International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Biodiversity Centre, 08 BP 0932 Tri Postal, Cotonou, BENIN. E-mail: g.goergen@cgiar.org

4National Museum, Department of Entomology, P.O. Box 266, Bloemfontein 9300, SOUTH AFRICA. E-mail: ashley.kirk-spriggs@nasmus.co.za

5Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, OD Taxonomy and Phylogeny and JEMU, Vautierstraat 29, B-1000 Brussels, BELGIUM. E-mail: thierry.backeljau@naturalsciences.be

6Corresponding author. E-mail: kurt.jordaens@africamuseum.be

Abstract

Recently (2013–2014), several hoverfly specimens from two localities in Benin and Cameroon (West and Central Africa) were caught from a species that we could not identify using existing identification keys for Afrotropical Syrphidae. Specific identification as *Toxomerus floralis* (Fabricius) was accomplished using morphology and various Neotropical identification keys. Corroboration of this identification was made by sequencing of the standard COI barcode region and a subsequent BLAST-IDS in BOLD that revealed a 100% sequence similarity with *Toxomerus floralis* from Suriname (South America). Species identification was further supported by sequencing parts of the nuclear 18S and 28S rRNA genes. The species is widespread in Togo, Benin, Nigeria and Cameroon, and eggs, larvae and adults are abundant at several localities. Yet, the full extent of its geographic distribution within tropical Africa remains to be determined. This is only the second known established introduction of a non-African hoverfly species in the Afrotropics. Interestingly, the larvae of the species have been reported as predators of Aphididae and Delphacidae but we found them to be pollenivorous, which is a rare feeding mode within the subfamily Syrphinae. Moreover, it is the only known Syrphinae species of which the larvae feed on pollen from two plant species from different families (Cyperaceae and Orobranchaceae). This example illustrates how DNA barcoding may allow a fast and accurate identification of introduced species.

Key words: 18S rRNA, 28S rRNA, Afrotropics, Central Africa, West Africa, COI, DNA barcoding, flower fly, pollenivory

Introduction

Flower flies, or hoverflies (Insecta: Diptera: Syrphidae), are a species-rich family of insects that are amongst the most important flower pollinators (Proctor et al. 1996). Worldwide, there are ca. 6,000 species, divided into four subfamilies: Eristalinae, Microdontinae, Pipizinae and Syrphinae (Thompson 2013; Mengual et al. 2015). Syrphinae have until recently been considered to consist almost exclusively of species with terrestrial, predatory larvae, mostly preying upon Hemiptera: Aphidoidea (Rotheray 1993; Thompson & Rotheray 1998). Exceptionally, larvae have different life histories.

Subaquatic larvae of some *Ocyptamus* Macquart species are predatory on a wide range of Coleoptera and Diptera larvae in the phytotelmata of bromeliads (Bromeliaceae) in South America (Rotheray et al. 2000). At least three *Allograpta* Osten Sacken species from the highlands of Costa Rica have phytophagous larvae, namely,