



On the Fauna of Cossidae (Lepidoptera) of Zimbabwe with description of a new species

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Abstract

The annotated list of Cossidae of Zimbabwe consists of 15 species in 9 genera from the subfamilies Cossinae and Zeuzerinae. The species *Brachylia vukutu* Yakovlev & Lenz, **sp. nov.** is newly described.

Key words: Cossidae, Zimbabwe, new species, fauna

Introduction

Zimbabwe (known as Southern Rhodesia before 1980) is a landlocked country in Southern Africa, neighboring the Republic of South Africa in the south, Botswana in the west, Zambia in the north and Mozambique in the east (Fig. 1). Most of Zimbabwe is situated at altitudes between 1000–1500 m on the plateaus of Mashonaland and Matabeleland, gradually lowering towards the lowveld of the Middle Zambezi in the north and between the Limpopo and Sabi in the south. The highest point of the country is Mount Inyangani (2592 m) in the Inyanga Mountains (Fig. 2) in the east of Zimbabwe. The Zambezi River basin is rather densely vegetated and drains into the Indian Ocean except for a small internal drainage basin in the east. Forests occupy nowadays less than half of the country's territory as the result of rapid deforestation. Relict wet evergreen forests can be seen only on the Inyanga Mountains in the east. Dry deciduous forests grow in the west (Fig. 3). Dry miombo-mopane woodlands are spread in Mashonaland, whereas the vegetation of Matabeleland consists of tree and bush savannah. Flooded savannah is mostly common in the Zambezi Valley. The climate of Zimbabwe varies from subequatorial in the north to tropical in the south. Three seasons of the year are warm wet summers (November–March, 21–27°Ñ), cool dry winters (April–June, 13–17°Ñ, with frosts in mountains), and hot dry springs (August–October, 30–40°Ñ). Annual precipitation varies from 400 mm in the southern plains to 2000 mm in the mountainous east.

No special research on the Cossidae of Zimbabwe has been done hitherto. Five species of Cossidae were reported for Zimbabwe (Schoorl 1990) and seven in the catalogue of the old world fauna (Yakovlev 2011).

Material and methods

Cossidae specimens were collected in Zimbabwe during various seasons in the course of expeditions of the second author of the article together with our colleagues Vasilii Kovtunovich (Moscow), Petr Ustjuzhanin (Novosibirsk) and Vasilii Anikin (Saratov). The first author worked in Zimbabwe in April 2011. All specimens were attracted to light sources. In addition to our own collections, we used the materials of MHUB (Museum für Naturkunde der Humboldt-Universität, Berlin), British museum (BMNH, London) and private collection of Valentin Kalinin (Moscow).