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Walker's *Eleodes* (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae)

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Abstract

The type specimens of five species of *Eleodes* described by Francis Walker from British Columbia, Canada, were studied in order to establish their true identity. The synonymy of *Eleodes convexicollis* Walker and *E. conjunctus* Walker with *E. obscurus* (Say); that of *Eleodes latiusculus* Walker with *E. humeralis* LeConte; and that of *Eleodes binotatus* Walker with *Eleodes hispilabris* (Say) is confirmed. *Eleodes subtuberculatus* Walker = *Eleodes parvulus* Blaisdell, new synonymy, and not a synonym of *E. granulatus* LeConte. Only in the latter case is a Walker name senior to the name currently in use.

Key words: Francis Walker, Synonymy, darkling beetles

Francis Walker, a prolific describer of insects under contract with the British Museum of Natural History in the mid-nineteenth century (Graham 1979), named five species in the tenebrionid genus *Eleodes* Eschscholtz. The descriptions appear on pages 328–330 in an appendix to the second of a two volume work published by John Keast Lord in 1866 entitled, “A Naturalist in Vancouver Island and British Columbia.” The British Museum’s register lists an acquisition of, “169 insects from Canada, British Columbia, presented by J.K. Lord Esq. collected on the boundary commission.” The acquisition is enumerated “64 18” indicating that it was the 18th acquisition of the year 1864 and indeed, several of the specimens under study bear a label “64 18.” The register lists the five species described by Walker by name, indicating that Walker had studied the material prior to the donation. The register further indicates that each species was represented by a single specimen.

All of Walker’s species were placed in synonymy of older names in Gebien’s (1910) catalog but without comment regarding the rationale for their placement. In at least one case the synonymy is problematic in that *Eleodes binotatus* Walker was listed under *Eleodes sponsus* LeConte, a species that does not occur in or near British Columbia.

Through the good offices of Max Barclay, curator of Coleoptera at the British Museum of Natural History, Walker’s specimens have been located and made available to us for study. The results of those studies are discussed below. Each species is represented by a single specimen, each with a circular label reading “Type H.T.” and although presumably added after Walker’s time, they are *de facto* holotypes by virtue of being monobasic. It should be noted that Walker, and many others, used feminine epithets for species in this genus, whereas *Eleodes* is masculine. The epithets are therefore emended to agree in gender in accordance with Article 31.2 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature.

Eleodes convexicollis Walker (Fig. 1)

Eleodes convexicollis Walker, 1866. vol. 2. p. 328 (*nec* Blaisdell 1909).

Original Description: “Black, rather dull. Head slightly excavated on the fore border and on each side in front of

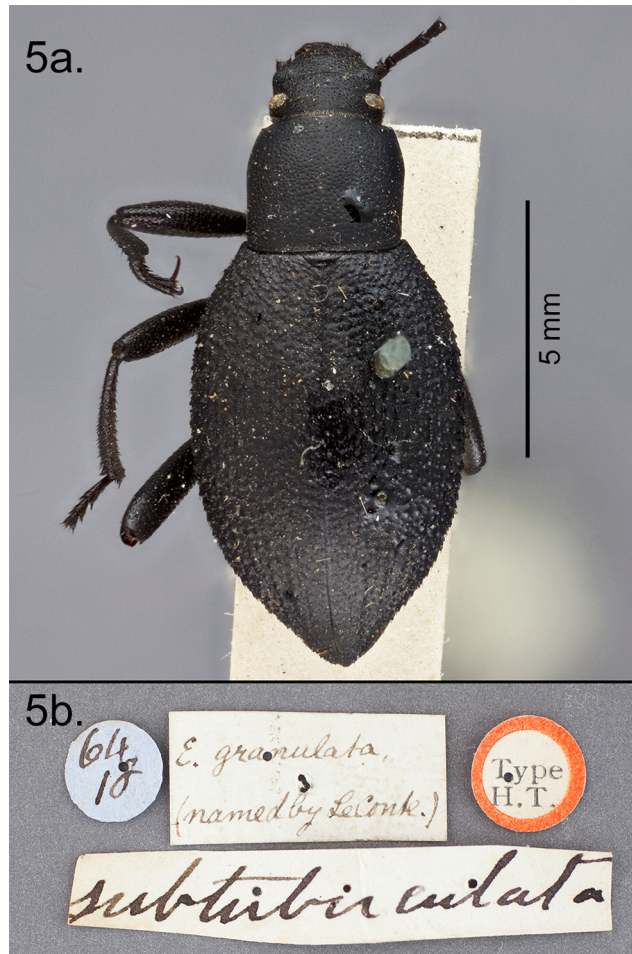


FIGURE 5. *Eleodes subtuberculatus* Walker (a) habitus (b) labels.

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