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Two new species in the genus *Geritola* Libert, 1999 (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae, Epitolini)

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Abstract

Two *Geritola* (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) species, closely related to the Central African *G. nitidica*, have been recognised as new to science. *G. wardi* **sp. n.** was captured in small series in Mabira, an eastern outlier forest in Uganda, while *G. pacifica* **sp. n.** was discovered in Liberia, in classic Upper-Guinean hyper-wet rainforests. Both of them are described in comparison to their allopatric relative *G. nitidica*, including male genitalia.

Key words: *Geritola wardi* **sp. n.**, *G. pacifica* **sp. n.**, Afrotropical Region, Uganda, Liberia, allopatry

Résumé

Deux espèces de *Geritola* (Lepidoptera : Lycaenidae) ont été découvertes ; elles sont proches de *G. nitidica*, propre à l'Afrique Centrale. Une petite série de *G. wardi* **n. sp.** a été récoltée à Mabira, une forêt périphérique de l'est de l'Ouganda, tandis que *G. pacifica* **n. sp.** a été trouvé dans les forêts très humides de Haute Guinée. Toutes deux sont décrites par comparaison avec l'espèce allopatric apparentée, *G. nitidica*, y compris les genitalia mâles.

Introduction

The genus *Geritola* was erected by Libert (1999) in his comprehensive revision of *Epitola* sensu lato. It contains 19 species plus a further subspecies, being among the smaller genera in Epitolini. They could be easily separated from other genera within the tribe on the basis of whitish underside, as the undersides of other genera are darker, having dark brown or golden ground colour. All species are distributed exclusively in the equatorial forest zone of Africa and are known to develop in myrmecophilous relationship with arboreal *Crematogaster* ants (Larsen 2005, Sáfián unpublished). Many species are known only from a few specimens or from small series, collected near *Crematogaster* infested ant-trees.

The recently described *Geritola nitidica* Libert & Collins, 1999 (Libert 1999) was unique in the genus, with its completely white underside, slightly darker greyish-white colour in the forewing apical area and a very faint and fine, brownish sub-marginal line on both wings. Most other *Geritola* have very characteristic mottled pattern covering both wings on the underside, drawn intricately by a network of grey or brown undulating and/or zigzagging lines. As *Geritola* are known to inhabit the canopy level in the rainforests of equatorial Africa (Larsen 2005), it is not very surprising that recent research targeting Epitolini revealed two new species, both without the usual mottled pattern. One appeared in Mabira, Uganda's eastern outlier forest, while the other one was found in Liberia's hyper-wet lowland forests, both of which are of significant biogeographic importance.

helped with digital processing of specimen photos and Ferenc Barka (Budapest, Hungary) with preparing the genitalia illustration. Zsolt Bálint (Budapest, Hungary) helped to confirm the genitalia differences with dissecting and photographing further specimens of *G. nitidica* and *G. wardi*. Peter Ward (Lagos, Nigeria) kindly provided his first specimens of *G. wardi* for the inclusion in the type series; they are all kept in the ABRI collection.

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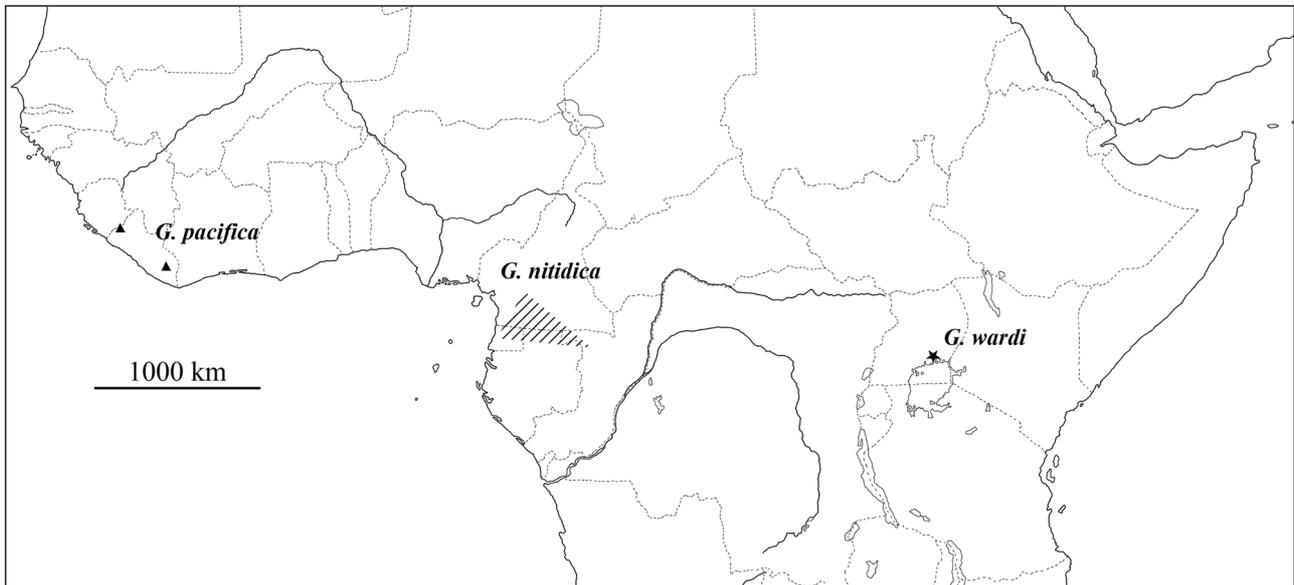


FIGURE 4. Known distribution of *Geritola pacifica* (triangles), *G. wardi* (asterisk) and *G. nitidica* (striped area).

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