

On the Status of Aedes (Ochlerotatus) fryeri (Theobald)
and Aedes (Ochlerotatus) mombasaensis Mattingly.

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Aedes fryeri, type locality Aldabra Island, Indian ocean, was described by Theobald in 1912 and 2 Aedes larvae from Aldabra were attributed to this species and described by Hopkins (1936). Later Edwards (1941) ascribed the East African coastal Ochlerotatus to this species but when it was discovered that the larvae of these differed from those attributed to Ae. fryeri, the east african specimens were described as Ae. (O.) mombasaensis (Mattingly, 1963).

In 1969 I received some mosquitoes collected by A. Hudson and B. Cogan, members of the Royal Society Expedition to Aldabra and among the adults were a number of Ae. fryeri and other Aedes of the subgenus Aedimorphus. Of the larvae some ran down to Ae. fryeri as described by Hopkins and others were as described for Ae. mombasaensis. Although no adults with associated pelts were obtained, some of the Aedimorphus were hatched from a batch of the supposedly Ae. fryeri larvae.

Through the kind offices of Dr. P. F. Mattingly, British Museum (Natural History), London, I was able to examine the 2 Aldabra larvae described as Ae. fryeri by Hopkins. These are undoubtedly the same as the larvae from which the above mentioned Aedimorphus were hatched and therefore were wrongly attributed to Ae. fryeri. In view of this it seems very probable that the Ae. mombasaensis larvae collected by the Royal Society expedition are the young stages of Ae. fryeri and thus, the reason for considering Ae. mombasaensis a separate species, no longer applies. Also a comparison of Ae. fryeri from Aldabra and Ae. mombasaensis from the Kenya coast showed no morphological differences in the female and since the male terminalia of the Aldabra Ae. fryeri are the same as those of Ae. mombasaensis, it is concluded that Ae. mombasaensis must be considered a synonym of Ae. fryeri.

References

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