

To: The Editor, Mosquito Systematics

Dear Sir:

Identification of Afrotropical Culicines

Some 150 new culicine and toxorhynchitine mosquitoes have been described since the book of F. W. Edwards (1941) - "Mosquitoes of the Ethiopian Region. III. Culicine adults and pupae," British Museum (Nat. Hist.), London. There is clearly a need to produce new keys for both larvae and adults and I propose to devote the next five years or more to undertaking this. The aim is to provide reliable methods for species identification, not to undertake a major taxonomic revision, nor to produce taxonomic descriptions mapping for each species every seta and scale - such an undertaking would take very much longer than 5 years and I am not convinced is a priority. I will also be giving brief taxonomic species descriptions to confirm identification made from the keys, and notes on the biology, ecology and behavior of larvae and adults and their relationship to disease transmission.

In connection with this project I would greatly appreciate receiving reprints of past, present and future papers on African culicine and toxorhynchitine mosquitoes.

Finally, I am a little troubled about adopting the new anatomical terms proposed by R. E. Harbach and K. L. Knight (1980) "Taxonomists' Glossary of Mosquito Anatomy," Plexus Publishing, and the corrections and additions given by these authors in Mosquito Systematics (1981) 13:201-217. For mosquito taxonomists this new nomenclature undoubtedly has much to recommend it, but the plethora of new names adds difficulties for the non-specialist - and I firmly believe that such people should be able to use the keys. For example, in describing adults instead of writing sternopleuron I should now use mesokatepisternum (an awful word), propleuron in effect becomes proepisternum, in the larvae mouthbrushes become lateral palatal brushes, the familiar ventral brush becomes seta 4-X. This new terminology will make it more difficult for non-specialists to use the keys and compare species descriptions with many previous published ones, reference will have to be made to a table of synonymy. However, having raised this issue I expect I will finally succumb and use the new terms, although I doubt if I will go so far as using unguis for claws.

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