Case 3269

*Rhamphomyia* (Rhamphomyia) Meigen, 1822 and *Rhamphomyia* (Pararhamphomyia) Frey, 1922 (Insecta, Diptera): proposed conservation of usage of the subgeneric names by designation of *Empis sulcata* Meigen, 1804 as the type species of *Rhamphomyia*

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Abstract. The purpose of this application, under Article 70.2 of the Code, is to conserve the widespread usage of the subgeneric names *Rhamphomyia* (Rhamphomyia) Meigen, 1822 and *Rhamphomyia* (Pararhamphomyia) Frey, 1922 for groups of dance-flies (family Empididae) by designating *Empis sulcata* Meigen, 1804 as the type species of *Rhamphomyia* (Rhamphomyia) Meigen, 1822. The valid type species is *Empis marginata* Fabricius, 1787. However, in 1834 Curtis invalidly designated *Empis sulcata* Meigen, 1804 as the type species and all subsequent authors have accepted this designation. Acceptance of the valid type species designation (*Empis marginata*) would destabilise the current usage of these subgeneric names and those of over 200 species currently included in these groups.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Diptera; Empididae; Rhamphomyia; Rhamphomyia (Rhamphomyia) marginata; Rhamphomyia (Pararhamphomyia) geniculata; dance-flies.

1. Meigen (1822, p. 42) described the genus *Rhamphomyia* and included 37 species. No type species was designated at that time. Guérin in Bory de Saint-Vincent (1828, p. 547) subsequently designated *Empis marginata* Fabricius, 1787 (p. 364) as the type species for *Rhamphomyia*, and provided a description of the genus and the characters that distinguish this genus from related genera. All subsequent authors overlooked this publication and type species designation until Evenhuis (1994) showed that *Empis marginata* was the valid type species of *Rhamphomyia* (and hence *Rhamphomyia* (Rhamphomyia)).

2. Apparently unaware of the work of Guérin, Curtis (1834, pl. 517 and accompanying text) designated *Empis sulcata* Meigen, 1804 as the type species of *Rhamphomyia*. This action was followed by Coquillett (1903) in his list of genera of Empididae, and then again in (1910) in his list of names of most genus-group taxa of North American Diptera. With the exception of Evenhuis (1994), *Empis sulcata* has been acknowledged to be the type species of *Rhamphomyia* in all publications (including all modern regional catalogues) subsequent to Coquillett (1903, 1910).
3. Currently, both Empis sulcata and E. marginata are assigned respectively to different subgenera: Rhamphomyia (Rhamphomyia) and Rhamphomyia (Pararhamphomyia) Frey, 1922 (p. 3). The type species by original designation (Frey, 1922, p. 33) of the subgenus Rhamphomyia (Pararhamphomyia) is Empis plumipes Fallen, 1816 (p. 25). This was a misidentification of R. geniculata Meigen, 1830 (p. 340; see Collin, 1961) and under Article 70.3.2 we herewith fix R. geniculata as the type species. The currently accepted subgeneric classification follows that of Collin (1961) with some comments by Barták (1981). Chvála & Wagner (1989) followed this classification for the ‘Catalogue of Palearctic Diptera’, where there are currently 110 species assigned to Rhamphomyia (Rhamphomyia) and 112 species assigned to Rhamphomyia (Pararhamphomyia).

4. There remains only a single specimen of the original type series of Empis sulcata (see Collin, 1961, p. 387; Barták, 1989, p. 5). Unfortunately, this is a female, which is indistinguishable from several closely related species. However, the species was redescribed by Collin (1961, p. 383) and Barták (1982, p. 412) and all subsequent workers have used the name Empis sulcata in their sense.

5. Replacement of the currently accepted type species of Rhamphomyia (Rhamphomyia), Empis sulcata, with the valid type species designation, Empis marginata, would result in many new combinations and would cause undue confusion and instability in the nomenclature and taxonomy of the Empididae. Therefore, we propose that the type designation for Rhamphomyia made by Guérin (1828) be set aside and that Empis sulcata Meigen be designated as the type species following the action of Curtis (1834).

6. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its plenary power to set aside all fixations of type species for the nominal genus Rhamphomyia Meigen, 1822 prior to the designation by Curtis (1834) of Empis sulcata Meigen, 1804;

(2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
   (a) Rhamphomyia Meigen, 1822 (gender: feminine), type species by subsequent designation by Curtis (1834) as ruled in (1) above Empis sulcata Meigen, 1822;
   (b) Pararhamphomyia Frey, 1922 (gender: feminine), type species by original designation Empis plumipes Fallen, 1816 (a misidentification of Rhamphomyia geniculata Meigen, 1830, fixed as the type species by Bartak & Sinclair (2003));

(3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
   (a) sulcata Meigen, 1822, as published in the binomen Empis sulcata (specific name of the type species of Rhamphomyia Meigen, 1822);
   (b) geniculata Meigen, 1830, as published in the binomen Rhamphomyia geniculata (specific name of the type species of Pararhamphomyia Frey, 1922).

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References


Curtis, J. 1834. British entomology: being illustrations and descriptions of the genera of insects found in Great Britain and Ireland: containing coloured figures from nature of the most rare and beautiful species, and in many instances of the plants upon which they are found, vol. 11. Pp. 482–529. Published by the author, London.


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Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the Bulletin; they should be sent to the Executive Secretary, I.C.Z.N., c/o The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).