

Research Notes

RECURRENCE OF *PLATYPALPUS GENTILIS* AFTER A CENTURY FROM WEST BENGAL, INDIA (DIPTERA: HYBOTIDAE)

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The members of the family Hybotidae are commonly known as dance flies which belong to the superfamily Empidoidea (Pape et al., 2011). This group was previously included as subfamily Hybotinae under family Empididae (Smith, 1975). Tachydromiinae in which the species *Platypalpus gentilis* Brunetti belongs, can be separated from other subfamilies by the absence of anal cell or incomplete anal vein, presence of three posterior cells, absence of discal cell and styliform arista.

The species under discussion was described by Brunetti (1913) as *Platypalpus gentilis*, but later transferred under the genus *Tachydromia* and included four other species *latifascipennis*, *ferruginea*, *nepalensis* and *orientalis*. Later on, Smith (1975) again mentioned the species *gentilis*, *ferruginea*, *nepalensis* and *orientalis* under the genus *Platypalpus*, but left *latifascipennis* in *Tachydromia*.

Literature reveals that many species of this family are predaceous and this species feeds on particularly small dipteran flies including larvae which could be found in soil, rotten wood and dung (Brunetti, 1920, Datta & Parui, 1992). All the species of this genus have so far been recorded from high altitudinal areas. Many other species of several genera are best represented in the Himalaya (Datta & Parui, 1992).

The species *Platypalpus gentilis* has been recorded from Shimla and Darjeeling Himalayas by Brunetti (1913). The present record has been made again from Darjeeling area after a long gap of a century and it may be assumed that the preference of this species is to be present in the high altitudinal areas.

Order Diptera
Superfamily Empidoidea
Family Hybotidae
Subfamily Tachydromiinae

Platypalpus gentilis Brunetti, 1913

1913. *Platypalpus gentilis* Brunetti. *Rec. Indian Mus.*, ix: 40.

Type-locality : India: West Bengal : Darjeeling.

Material examined: 1 ex., India, West Bengal, Darjeeling dist., Sonada, 16.v.2015. coll. N. Pradhan.

Diagnosis: The genus *Platypalpus* Meigen, 1803 includes five species in India (Brunetti, 1920) of which the present species differs from its closest species *P. orientalis* by its long proboscis being as long as head height and palpi half, as long as the former; thorax shining black bearing sparse yellow hairs and its lateral bristles; abdomen black; legs pale yellowish brown, mid femur incrassated with two rows of small black spines below; wings clear.

Distribution: Himachal Pradesh (Shimla) and West Bengal (Darjeeling).

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Ban on Chinese 'Manjha'

The National Green Tribunal imposed a nationwide interim ban on the procurement, sale and use of glass powder-coated 'manjha' and other dangerous kite strings.

Also called 'Chinese manjha'—as well as synthetic/cotton thread coated with glass powder or other hazardous compounds is now banned. Kite strings not only posed a threat to birds, animals and humans, sometimes fatal, but also caused harm to the environment.