

Contribution to the knowledge of the Nolini of the Maputo Special Reserve in South Mozambique with description of two new species and several taxonomic updates (Lepidoptera, Nolidae, Nolinae)

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Abstract

Present paper contains the first comprehensive summary of the Nolini species of the Maputo Special Reserve collected between November 2016 and February 2018. The Nolini fauna counts 21 species in total, 17 species are proved to be new for the fauna of Mozambique, two species are new to science and described here as *Mecothrix maputuana* sp. n. and *Meganola shangaana* sp. n. The subgenus *Mecothrix* Hacker, 2012 is upgraded to genus rank. *Mecothrix cana* Hacker, 2012 and *Nola submelanoscelis* Hacker, 2012 are downgraded to subspecies rank (*Mecothrix aegyptiaca cana* Hacker, 2012 stat. n., *Nola biangulata submelanoscelis* Hacker, 2012 stat. n.). *Meganola meridianissima* Hacker, 2012 syn. n. and *Meganola kakamega* Hacker, 2012 syn. n. are synonymized with *Meganola bispermutata* Hacker, 2012, in addition *Nolidia nanoxantha* Hacker, 2012 syn. n. and *Nolidia polionana* Hacker, 2012 syn. n. are synonymised with *Nolidia elachistomorphia* Hacker, 2012. *Nolidia elachistomorphia* is transferred to the genus *Hampsonola* László, Ronkay & Ronkay, 2015 (*Hampsonola elachistomorphia* (Hacker, 2012) comb. n.). With 43 colour and 40 black and white figures.

Key words: faunistics, checklist, new species, new status, new combination, new synonymy, new records, Maputo Special Reserve, Mozambique, Afrotropics

Introduction

As part of a joint research project of the African Natural History Research Trust (ANHRT), the Natural History Museum of Maputo (MHNM) and the National Administration of Conservation Areas (ANAC) a series of sampling expeditions have been conducted to the Maputo Special Reserve with the aim of obtaining comprehensive knowledge on the Lepidoptera fauna of the Reserve. Maputo Special Reserve was established in 1932 under Portuguese colonial time as a recreation and trophy hunting area, and later was transformed into a conservation area to protect elephant population of the area (Soto *et al* 2001). After introduction of further large mammals and recognition of the importance of the area as part of Maputaland Center of Endemism the Elephant Reserve has been renamed as Maputo Special Reserve. With the aim to ensure good management and sustainability of conservation projects, in collaboration with conservation areas of the Republic of South Africa and Swaziland, Maputo Special Reserve was later included in the Libombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (Smith *et al* 2008). Besides the main goal of keeping a strong elephant and other larger mammal population alive and thriving, the reserve is home to some rare and threatened vegetation types, namely coastal sand forest (Matthews *et al* 2001), dune forest and dune grassland (Smith *et al* 2008). These special habitats used to compose the pristine coastal vegetation of Southern and Southeastern Africa, but their areas have shrunk drastically for today, mainly in community areas (Gaugris & Van Rooyen 2010). Maputo Special Reserve is one of the few conservation areas where these important ecosystems can still be found in significant coverage under protected conditions (see Matthews *et al* 2001; Smith *et al* 2008). These special habitats make the Reserve especially interesting from entomological point of view with the high potential of discoveries of scientific novelties.