

Description of a new species of *Alliopsis* Schnabl & Dziedzicki (Diptera, Anthomyiidae) from Armenia and Georgia that is predaceous on black fly larvae (Diptera, Simuliidae)

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Abstract. A new species of Anthomyiidae, *Alliopsis simulivora* Ackland n.sp., is described from Armenia and Georgia, and observations on the adult flies preying on larvae of the black flies *Prosimulium petrosus* Rubtsov, 1955 and *Simulium* (*Wilhelmia*) group (Diptera, Simuliidae) in Armenia are reported.

Zusammenfassung. Die Beschreibung einer neuen Art der Familie Anthomyiidae, *Alliopsis simulivora* Ackland n.sp., aus Armenien und Georgia wird vorgenommen. Das prädatatorische Verhalten der adulten Fliegen an Kriebelmückenlarven von *Prosimulium petrosus* Rubtsov, 1955 und der *Simulium* (*Wilhelmia*) Gruppe (Diptera, Simuliidae) wird beschrieben.

Key words. Diptera, Anthomyiidae, new species, Armenia, Georgia, Simuliidae, predation.

Introduction

The family Anthomyiidae is worldwide in distribution and contains some 1560 described species (according to SUWA 1998), although the present number is probably closer to 1700. Most are black, grey or brownish coloured species, with a wing length of about 5 mm. Many species occur abundantly as adults in moist grassy areas and have achieved notoriety because of the deleterious activities of their larvae in agriculture and horticulture, as feeders on roots or stems or flower heads, in commercial vegetable crops and ornamental plants (HUCKETT 1987).

Adults of the genera *Zaphne* Robineau-Desvoidy and *Alliopsis* Schnabl & Dziedzicki are known to be predators on other soft-bodied insects. Two species of *Alliopsis*, *A. billbergi* (Zetterstedt) and *A. silvestris* (Fallén), were recorded as predators of Diptera by SYTSHEVSKAYA (1981). The species of both genera have a proboscis modified for piercing cuticle and sucking out the body contents. They are commonly found alongside rivers and streams, but there are few published reports of their prey or of their predatory activity.

A recent review of the dipteran predators of black flies by WERNER & PONT (2003) found that there were no effective antagonists of Simuliidae in the family Anthomyiidae. Predaceous genera formerly assigned to the family „Anthomyiidae“ in the old sense are now assigned to the Muscidae. However, during an investigation of predator-prey interactions among black fly populations and their antagonists in ecological systems in the Caucasus region of Armenia, a species of Anthomyiidae belonging to the genus *Alliopsis* was observed to capture and feed on larval black flies.