Faunistic study of the fruit flies (Diptera, Tephritidae) in the United Arab Emirates, with a new record and an updated checklist

Saeed Mohamadzade Namin1* & Huw Roberts2

1 Department of Plant protection, Faculty of Agriculture, Varamin-Pishva Branch, Islamic Azad University, Varamin, Iran. saedmn2005@gmail.com
2 Sheikh Suroor Compound, Al Muwaiji, Al Ain, UAE. hgbroberts@gmail.com

ABSTRACT. Collecting of tephritid fruit flies at four sites in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), resulted in the presence of eleven species. Capparimyia savastani is reported for the first time from UAE fauna. The number of UAE Tephritidae fauna is increased to 34. The first checklist of fruit flies of UAE is also provided.

Key words: Fauna, Arabian Peninsula, Tephritidae, UAE, new record, checklist

Introduction

With about 5,000 described valid species, the Tephritidae (true fruit flies) is one of the largest family of acaulpyrate Diptera (Pape et al., 2011). Most tephritid species are phytophagous and some species are serious pests in agricultural ecosystems (White & Elson-Harris, 1992). Some species are beneficial and effectively used in biological control programs (White & Elson-Harris, 1992).

UAE is a country in South West Asia covering an area of 83,600 km². It is bordered in the north by the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman; in the west by Saudi Arabia and in the east by Oman. It occupies a spectacular position near the junction of the Palaeartic and Afrotopical zoogeographic regions. The first taxonomic studies in the UAE fauna literature were mainly focused on insect pests (van Harten, 2005; White, 2006). Later, the number of species recorded from UAE was increased by Merz (2008, 2011) where he described Euarestella korneyevi Merz, 2011, Euarestella vanharteni Merz, 2008, Oxyaciura nigra Merz, 2008 and recorded dozens of species. Thirty-three species of fruit flies were known up to date from UAE. In the studies on fruit flies fauna of the UAE, several specimens of fruit flies were collected, and one species identified as a new record for UAE fauna.

Corresponding author: Saeed Mohamadzade Namin, E-mail: saedmn2005@gmail.com

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Material and methods

Material was collected by a standard sweeping net. The main study site was the western flank of Jebel Hafeet, in Al Ain, UAE, where most of the specimens were collected in 2014, 2015, 2018 and 2020. The other sites were Wadi Wurayah, Fujairah, Green Mubazzarah and a private garden in Muwaiji, Al Ain. Collected material was stored in 75% isopropyl alcohol or pinned and deposited in the insect collection of Jalal Afshar Zoological Museum, University of Tehran, Iran (JAZM) and personal collection of the first author (SMNC). Species were identified according to Hendel (1927), Freidberg & Kugler (1989), Merz (2002), De Meyer & Freidberg (2005) and White (2006). Morphological terminology follows White et al. (1999).

Field photos (Fig. 1) were taken using Nikon D850 body with Nikon AF-S Micro Nikkor 105mm f/2.8G IF-ED VR, along with R1 Wireless Close-Up Speedlight System. Stack photos of pinned specimens (Fig. 3) were taken using Nikon D850 body, using Laowa 25mm f2.8 2.5-5X ultra-macro lens and Laowa 60mm f/2.8 2X ultra-macro lenses.

Results

The subfamilies, tribes and species are listed in alphabetic order. Detailed morphological descriptions are not given. For further information, refer to the works of Hendel (1927), White (2006), Freidberg & Kugler (1989) and Merz (2008).

Subfamily Trypetinae Loew, 1861

Bactrocera zonata (Saunders, 1842) (Fig. 2C, D)

Material examined: UAE, Ain Al Waal, Al Ain (24°4′14.81″ N, 55°44′49.54″ E), 1♀, 24.III.2020, swept on Ochradenus aucheri. leg. Huw Roberts (JAZM).

Distribution: This species is native to Oriental region (India, Bangladesh, Laos, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam) and later introduced to USA, North Africa (Libya, Egypt and Sudan), Mauritius and Réunion, Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Israel (Norrbom et al., 1999; White, 2006; Merz, 2008; CABI, 2020).

Capparimyia savastani (Martelli, 1911) (Fig. 2A, B)

Material examined: UAE, Ain Al Waal, Al Ain (24°4′14.81″ N, 55°44′49.54″ E), 1♂, 6.XII.2018, swept on Capparis sинаica Veilllard. leg. Huw Roberts (SMNC).

Distribution: Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Malta, Cyprus, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Iran, Oman, Yemen and Pakistan (Freidberg & Kugler 1989; Norrbom et al., 1999; Donati & Belcari, 2003; De Meyer & Freidberg, 2005; Merz et al., 2006; Miranda et al., 2008; Papachristos et al., 2009; Ghahari, 2013; Moussa & Yammouni, 2014; El Harym & Belqat, 2017; Demetriou & Kryfos, 2020) (new record for UAE) (Fig. 1).


Diagnosis: This species can be distinguished from other species of Capparimyia with the following characters: Arista pubescent; first flagellomere rounded apically; two pairs of orbital setae; black postpronotal spot restricted to the base of postpronotal seta; white medial scutal vitta extending anteriorly beyond transverse suture and joining posteriorly to white band in basal part of scutellum; black medial vitta extending anteriorly to or just beyond transverse suture; black apical scutellar spots narrowly separated along entire length (De Meyer & Freidberg, 2005).
Figure 1. Worldwide distribution map of Capparimyia savastani (Diptera: Tephritidae).

**Dacus ciliatus Loew, 1862** (Figs. 3A, 2E, 2F)

**Material examined:** UAE, Ain Al Waal, Al Ain (24°4′14.81″ N, 55°44′49.54″ E), 1♂, 1♀, 15.I.2015, swept on Calotropis procera and Ochradenus aranicus; 1♂ 7.4.2020, same locality, leg. Huw Roberts (JAZM, SMNC).

**Distribution:** Senegal E to Somalia, S to South Africa, Madagascar, Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Israel E to Burma (Norrbom et al., 1999; Merz, 2008).

**Remarks:** This species is similar to *D. frontalis* Becker; the distribution of these two species overlaps in many Afrotropical countries. The most important character to differentiate them is the color of anatergite and katatergite which are whitish yellow in *D. frontalis* (only katatergite is yellowish in *D. ciliatus*). Some specimens of *D. ciliatus* from Iran and Morocco showed intermediate coloration with small yellowish spot on anatergite (Mohamadzade & El Harym, unpublished data), and indicated that molecular analysis is needed to understand the taxonomic position of these possibly cryptic species.

**Dacus longistylus** Wiedemann, 1830 (Fig. 2G, H)

**Material examined:** UAE, Ain Al Waal, Al Ain (24°4′14.81″ N, 55°44′49.54″ E), 1♂, 2♀, 31.I.2020, swept on Calotropis procera, leg. Huw Roberts (JAZM).

**Distribution:** Africa, Middle East to Yemen (Norrbom et al., 1999; White, 2006).

**Dacus persicus** Hendel, 1927 (Fig. 3B)

**Specimens examined:** UAE, Ain Al Waal, Al Ain (24°4′14.81″ N, 55°44′49.54″ E), 1♂ 14.XII.2013; same locality, 1♀ 17.10.2014; same locality, 1♂, 1♀, 15.I.2015 (SMNC); same locality, 1♂ 17.XII.2015; Wadi Wurayah, Fujairah (24°5′50.93″ N, 55°45′8.63″ E), 1♀ 10.IV.2014, swept on Calotropis procera, leg. Huw Roberts (JAZM).
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Figure 2. General habitus of fruit flies (Diptera: Tephritidae) collected in UAE. A-B. Capparimyia savastni, C-D. Bactrocera zonata, E-F. Dacus ciliatus, G-H. D. longistylus.
Distribution: Arabian Peninsula, Iran, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka (Norrbom et al., 1999; Merz, 2008).

Remarks: This species is similar to D. longistylus but the wing marking is reduced and has shorter ovipositor than D. longistylus (in D. pericus, ovipositor is shorter than abdominal tergite 3-5 combined but in D. longistylus the ovipositor is as long as abdomen but there is a large variation in the length of ovipositor in both species). There is a variation in the presence of lateral postcultural yellow vitae on the scutum of both species. They also have same host plant (Calotropis procera) but as White (2006) also suggested before, D. persicus might be a geographic variant of D. longistylus and the size variation may be due to differences between host fruits they consume in different geographic regions. Molecular analysis is needed to understand the taxonomic position of these possibly cryptic species.

Subfamily Tephritinae Newman, 1834

Goniurellia lacerata (Becker, 1913) (Fig. 3C, D)

Material examined: UAE, Ain Al Waal, Al Ain (24°4′14.81″ N, 55°44′49.54″ E), 1♀, 3.II.2015, swept on Calotropis procera, leg. Huw Roberts (SMNC).

Distribution: Egypt, Iran and UAE (Norrbom et al., 1999; Merz, 2008).

Goniurellia octoradiata Merz, 2002 (Fig. 3E)

Material examined: UAE, Ain Al Waal, Al Ain (24°4′14.81″ N, 55°44′49.54″ E), 1♂, 19.III.2014, swept on Pulicaria glutinosa; same locality, 1♂, 2.V.2020, leg. Huw Roberts (SMNC).


Goniurellia tridens (Hendel, 1910)

Material examined: UAE, Ain Al Waal, Al Ain (24°4′14.81″ N, 55°44′49.54″ E), 1♀, 16.XI.2015, leg. Huw Roberts (SMNC).

Distribution: Israel, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Pakistan and India (Zaitzev, 1947; Norrbom et al., 1999; Korneyev & Dirlbek, 2000; Merz & Dawah, 2005; Merz, 2008)

Goniurellia sp. (Fig. 3F)

Material examined: UAE, Ain Al Waal, Al Ain (24°4′14.81″ N, 55°44′49.54″ E), swept on Pulicaria glutinosa, 1♀, 18.III.2014, leg. Huw Roberts (SMNC).

Remarks: This specimen is morphologically and in wing pattern similar to the G. octoradiata Merz, but smaller hyaline spot in r1 cell is penetrated into r2+3 and the abdominal tergites are pale reddish brown (dark gray in G. octoradiata). More material is needed in order to study the variability of different specimens.

Metasphenisca negeviana (Freidberg, 1974) (Fig. 3G)

Material examined: UAE, Green Mubazzarah, Al Ain (24°5′50.93″ N, 55°45′8.63″ E), 1♀, 8.IV.2010, found on Blepharis ciliaris, leg. Huw Roberts (SMNC).

Distribution: Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia UAE, Yemen (Freidberg & Kugler, 1989; Korneyev & Dirlbek, 2000; Merz & Dawah, 2005; Merz et al, 2006; Merz, 2011)
Figure 3. General habitus of fruit flies (Diptera: Tephritidae) collected in UAE. A. Dacus ciliatus, B. D. persicus, C-D. Goniurellia lacerata, E. G. octoradiata, F. Goniurellia sp., G. Metasphenisca negeviana, H. Trupanea pulcherrima.
**Trupanea pulcherrima** (Efflatoun, 1924) (Fig. 3H)

**Material examined:** UAE, Ain Al Waal, Al Ain (24°4′14.81″ N, 55°44′49.54″ E), 2♀♀, 6.II.2014, swept on *Ochradenus arabicus*, leg. Huw Roberts (JAZM, SMNC).

**Distribution:** Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Iran (Norrbom et al., 1999; Merz, 2008; El Harym & Belqat, 2017).

**Discussion**

In this study eleven species of fruit flies were collected from 3 sites in the UAE. Ten of them were identified at species level, and one species of *Goniurellia* remains unnamed. Merz (2011) also reported that several undescribed *Goniurellia* are represented in the UAE but the brief descriptions of those samples differ to the newly collected one in this study. *Capparimyia savastani* is newly reported for UAE and the checklist of the family Tephritidae in UAE increases to 34 species (Table 1). Based on the distribution map (Fig. 1), it is predicted that this species can be distributed in other Mediterranean region and the Middle East countries.

**Table 1.** Checklist of the fruit flies (Diptera: Tephritidae) of UAE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Bactrocera cucurbitae</em> (Coquillett, 1899)</td>
<td>Merz, 2011</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><em>Bactrocera dorsalis</em> (Hendel, 1912)</td>
<td>van Harten, 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Bactrocera zonata</em> (Saunders, 1842)</td>
<td>White, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Capparimyia savastani</em> (Martelli 1911)</td>
<td>Present study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>Carponya incompleta</em> (Becker, 1903)</td>
<td>van Harten, 2005</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td><em>Carponya vesuviana</em> Costa, 1854</td>
<td>van Harten, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><em>Dacus ciliatus</em> Loew, 1862</td>
<td>van Harten, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><em>Dacus longistylus</em> Wiedemann, 1830</td>
<td>van Harten, 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><em>Dacus persicus</em> Hendel, 1927</td>
<td>White, 2006</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td><em>Dacus semisphaerius</em> Becker, 1903</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td><em>Dacus vertebratus</em> Bezzi, 1908</td>
<td>van Harten, 2005</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td><em>Neoceratitis efflatouni</em> (Hendel, 1931)</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Species</th>
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<td>13</td>
<td><em>Acanthiophilus helianthi</em> (Rossi, 1794)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td><em>Aciura afghana</em> (Hering, 1961)</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td><em>Euarestella korneevi</em> Merz, 2011</td>
<td>Merz, 2011</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td><em>Euarestella sp. near kugleri</em> Freidberg, 1974</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><em>Euarestella vanharteni</em> Merz, 2008</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td><em>Goniurellia lacerata</em> (Becker, 1913)</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td><em>Goniurellia longicauda</em> Freidberg, 1980</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><em>Goniurellia octoradiata</em> Merz, 2002</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
</tr>
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<td>21</td>
<td><em>Goniurellia tridens</em> (Hendel, 1910)</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td><em>Hyalotephritis planiscutellata</em> (Becker, 1903)</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td><em>Katonaia aida</em> Hering, 1938</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
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Table 1. Continued.

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<th>Species</th>
<th>References</th>
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<td>Metasphenisca negeviana (Freidberg, 1974)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Metasphenisca sp. near tetrachaeta (Bezzi, 1918)</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Oxyaciura nigra Merz, 2008</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Oxyaciura tibialis (Robineau-Desvoidy, 1830)</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Rhochmopterum sp.</td>
<td>Merz, 2011</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Schistopterum moebiusi Becker, 1903</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
</tr>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Sphaeniscus trifasciatus Korneyev &amp; J. Dirlbek, 2000</td>
<td>Merz, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Trupanea amoena (Frauenfeld, 1857)</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Trupanea pulcherrima (Efflatoun, 1924)</td>
<td>Merz, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Trupanea stellata (Fuesslin, 1775)</td>
<td>van Harten, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Trupanea tubulata Munro, 1964</td>
<td>Merz, 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acknowledgments

We greatly appreciate the kindness of Dr. Marc de Meyer (Royal Museum of Central Africa, Belgium) and Dr. Valery A. Korneyev (I.I. Schmalhausen institute of Zoology, Ukraine) for providing literature. The Ain Al Waal study was helped in 2015 by a contribution from the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References


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مطالعه فونستیک مگس‌های میوه (Diptera: Tephritidae) در امارات متحده عربی، همراه با گزارش جدید یک گونه و چکلیست گونه‌ها

سعید محمدزاده نمین 1* و هو روبرتز 2

1 گروه گیاه‌پزشکی، دانشکده کشاورزی، واحد ورامین-پیشوا، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی ورامین، ایران.
2 مجتمع شیخ سرور، المواجی، العین، امارات متحده عربی.

* پست الکترونیکی نویسنده مسئول مکاتبه: saedmn2005@gmail.com

تاریخ دریافت: 22 خرداد 1399 | تاریخ پذیرش: 29 تیر 1399 | تاریخ انتشار: 7 مرداد 1399

چکیده: بر اساس بررسی انجام شده روی فون مگس‌های خانواده Tephritidae در چهار منطقه در امارات متحده عربی، 11 گونه جمع‌آوری گردید. گونه Capparimyia savastani برای نخستین بار از کشور امارات متحده عربی گزارش می‌گردد. تعداد گونه‌های این خانواده در کشور امارات متحده عربی به ۴۳ گونه افزایش یافته است. همچنین اولین چکلیست گونه‌های خانواده Tephritidae در امارات متحده عربی نیز تهیه شد.

واژگان کلیدی: فون، شبه جزیره عربستان، Tephritidae, گزارش جدید، چکلیست

گزارش جدید، چکلیست