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SCIENTIFIC NOTE

Oncideres Serville (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) Key to Too Few: 34 Species Lost

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This note was prompted by failed attempts to identify a small species of Oncideres Serville using the key in Dillon and Dillon (1946). Only by abandoning the key and comparing the specimen with the illustrations and their associated descriptions was it possible to identify the beetle, Oncideres minuta Thomson, 1868.

So, why did the key not work? To figure that out, I followed the key backwards from O. minuta at couplet 57, to 56, to 55, and to couplet 54, at which point the trail went cold. The number 54 did not appear anywhere else in the key. Obviously, there was an error somewhere that resulted in a section of the key being isolated from the rest.

To find out what had gone awry, and to detect possible additional difficulties, I rearranged the key in indented form, as is the custom in botany. That exercise revealed two number errors: in triplet 3, 3b should go to 13, not to 12; and in couplet 40, 40b should go to 54, not to 47.

The error of 12 instead of 13 severs 15 species from the key (Oncideres albomaculata Dillon and Dillon, Oncideres argentata Dillon and Dillon, Oncideres bouchardi Bates, Oncideres cephalotes Bates, Oncideres chevrotatii Thompson, Oncideres dejeanii Thompson, Oncideres fulvoguttata Dillon and Dillon, Oncideres gemmata Dillon and Dillon, Oncideres germarii Thompson, Oncideres irrorata Melzer, Oncideres limpid Bates, Oncideres miniata Thompson, Oncideres multicincta Dillon and Dillon, Oncideres saga Dalman, and Oncideres sobrina Dillon and Dillon). The error of 47 instead of 54 orphans 19 more (Oncideres aegrota Thompson, Oncideres bondari Melzer, Oncideres canidia Dillon and Dillon, Oncideres castanea Dillon and Dillon, Oncideres digna Bates, Oncideres fisheri Dillon and Dillon, Oncideres fulvosillata Bates, Oncideres guttulata Thompson, Oncideres humeralis Thompson, O. minuta, Oncideres ocellaris Bates, Oncideres pectoralis Thompson, Oncideres philosipes Dillon and Dillon, Oncideres poecila Bates, Oncideres pustulata LeConte, Oncideres putator Thompson, Oncideres schreiterii Bruch, Oncideres senilis Bates, and Oncideres voetii Thompson), for a total of 34 species inaccessible to users of the key. As published, the key works for 38 of the 72 species covered. Users should be alert to the possibility of similar errors in other keys in that work.

A corrected and indented version of the key is available online at coleopsoc.org/supplement/Aiello_2014_Supplement.pdf on The Coleopterists Society website. To smooth the indented key’s functioning, and when possible keep members of a couplet together, nine intra-couplet switches (1, 9, 33, 37, 48, 49, 54, 68, and 69) were made.

Reference Cited


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