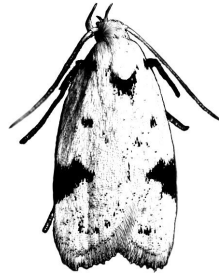


I.N.G.A.



Newsletter of the International Network of Gelechioid Aficionados

Welcome to I.N.G.A., the “International Network of Gelechioidea Aficionados.” We plan to make this newsletter an open forum for exchanging information among all individuals who are interested in gelechioids, regardless of whether subscribers are involved in research on this superfamily, involved in museum curation, or someone working independently to study this diverse superfamily.

This newsletter has the goals of 1) providing updates on gelechioid research, and nomenclatorial changes, 2) providing a forum for exchange of information among those interested in this superfamily of moths, 3) providing an annual bibliography of references relating to gelechioid systematics, with reviews of selected monographs, and, 4) providing an outlet for soliciting assistance from other systematists and curators throughout the world for acquiring material to conduct research.

We would like to increase our initial mailing list to include more individuals who have interests in Gelechioidea and who may be interested in receiving this newsletter. As all requested contributions are totally voluntary-based, anyone receiving this newsletter will not be obligated for any submission. Please inform us if you do not want to receive future copies of this newsletter or if you can suggest others who might want to receive this.

We would like to make the following requests to others involved with research on Gelechioidea: 1) please send a short paragraph/article describing your current or planned research along with any requests you may have for research material, and 2) please send a list of your publications during 2011-2012 if missing from the list of this newsletter with full citations for inclusion in our next newsletter. We welcome photographs of you or your taxon. Ideally, we would like to compile any nomenclatorial changes that occur annually, and submission of such changes by individual researchers would be welcome.

We will distribute this newsletter twice each year. Please submit information on current research, publications and other news to one of the co-editors: Maria Heikkilä and Mari Kekkonen in Finland and Sangmi Lee and Richard Brown in the U.S.A. (for contact information, please see the last page). Thanks to Robert Hoare for proposing the acronym I.N.G.A., based on a genus of Oecophoridae, for the title of this newsletter. We are also grateful to Scott Justis for allowing us to use his photograph as a logo picture and Robert Hoare, Lauri Kaila and Jean-François Landry for providing comments on the newsletter.

*Richard L. Brown, Maria Heikkilä,
Mari Kekkonen & Sangmi Lee*

Gelechioid Aficionados

Robert Hoare

I am the Head Curator and Lepidoptera Systematist at the New Zealand Arthropod Collection, Landcare Research, Auckland, New Zealand. Originally from England, I started my entomological career studying Nepticulidae for my PhD in Australia, and maintain an interest in this and other families of leaf-mining moths, although there are relatively few leaf-mining Lepidoptera in New Zealand.

Since arriving in New Zealand, I have specialised on a lineage of Xyloryctidae, the *Hierodoris* group of genera, that is so far largely known from New Zealand, though several Australian taxa are known, and there are probably New Caledonian members too. (This group of genera has traditionally been assigned to Oecophoridae, and I've retained this placement tentatively until now, while it appears on all the phylogenetic evidence to be increasingly untenable!)

Various circumstances have led me to abandon Gelechioidea temporarily for Noctuoidea, but I hope to be back soon. The New Zealand Lepidoptera fauna is so compact (perhaps little more than 2000 species) and in such an interesting state of taxonomic knowledge (mostly described, but still with many interesting new discoveries to be made in the field and in collections) that I retain an interest in all groups, though Geometridae scare me. I have decided, for better or worse, to focus on

improving knowledge of the New Zealand fauna, and not to attempt to become an expert on any one family worldwide!

Lauri Kaila

I work as a Senior Curator in The Finnish Museum of Natural History. I am interested in all aspects of Lepidoptera systematics, but it seems that fate has directed me to focus on the Gelechioidea in particular. Perhaps that has something to do with the fact that my 'serious' taxonomic work started in a young and sensitive age with Elachistidae (or Elachistinae of an expanded Elachistidae) where my species-level taxonomic interest and expertise still, almost entirely, resides. Regarding this group, my interest is world-wide, not restricted to any particular geographic area, thanks to the almost-manageable number of species in total. My other long-time topic of interest has been the pursuit of obtaining understanding of the phylogeny of the Gelechioidea, using both morphology and molecules as a tool, and a family classification that would be phylogeny-based.

In phylogeny, I am almost omnivorous within Lepidoptera, but Gelechioidea and its subgroups are my focal target. That is because I do believe that gelechioids are the least understood of the largest lepidopteran superfamilies, and a data-based phylogeny and classification could make it easier to approach. Having a comprehensive-real-data-based, phylogeny-based classification as a back-up one could focus better on some groups without the need of knowing everything about everything before anything could be done. This is the situation that has been prevailed for a large part of Gelechioidea, without doubt a reason why this this superfamily has been so difficult to approach.



Robert Hoare and Lauri Kaila enjoying a break in New Zealand. Photo by Jaakko Kullberg

Jean-François Landry

I have worked for the past 30 years as research systematist at Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, which is the custodian for the Canadian National Collection of Insects in Ottawa. I am also the Curator of Lepidoptera for the CNC.

My initial involvement in Gelechoidea was serendipitous. As a young graduate student interested in insect ecology and systematics, I won through a competition a position to do research on Lepidoptera at the AAFC and the CNC: at the time, being near completion of my masters degree, my new employment was conditional upon entering a doctoral program and gaining a PhD in microleps systematics. Having worked previously on carabid beetles, I found myself crash-learning microleps. No really knowing what to study for my PhD, I turned to lepidopterists at the Smithsonian Institution for advice. The family Scythrididae was suggested, as it was deemed then that the relatively small Nearctic fauna would constitute a neat little thesis project... How far from the truth this would turn out to be! However, I always liked a challenge (perhaps I am a fool). So I plunged straight ahead into scythridids and gelechioids.

I admit that it was rather forbidding at first. Externally scythridids are not exactly the most attractive micromoths. However, I soon found that their genitalia were absolutely amazing and bizarre (by Lepidoptera standards). I also liked that most scythrids are best collected with a net at the height of day in hot weather and that some have funny habits such as running on sand dunes. And I found doing microdissections, which is an absolute necessity and a starting point in the study of these micromoths, to be a lot of fun: it is like opening presents, one never quite knows what to expect. I was fascinated and hooked.

Eventually I branched into other gelechioids, especially Nearctic Coleophoridae. Although sticking to Scythrididae would be plenty to fill a career,



working for an agriculture department meant that research had to have at least a minimal agricultural connection, namely to pests and the likes. Thus Coleophoridae were added to my roster, another family where the Nearctic fauna is poorly known. I also digressed into some non-gelechioids [Acrolepiidae (oops! now Acrolepiinae), Gracillariidae, Yponomeutidae, Pyralidae, etc.], thanks to economic imperatives. However, my primary interest resides with the Gelechioidea. My focal point is species-level work, particularly in the Nearctic fauna. I use morphology, biology, behaviour, and genes in my studies, though DNA is a more recent development that stemmed from the barcode initiative.

Our institution has a national identification service, which means that we receive identification requests from across the country and from all kinds of people and organization. I am thus called to identify all manners of microleps, even from abroad when intercepted in imported goods, often in less-than-ideal condition. This, added to the inadequate knowledge of our Canadian fauna, has contributed to my focus at the species level.

Gelechioidea can be arguably considered the last frontier in Lepidoptera. Not only are they megaspeciose but they also encompass all manners of life styles, from the classics such as leaf miners, leaf rollers, webbers, and borers, to more exotic habits like detritivores, fungivores, carnivores,

Gelechioid Aficionados

Jean-François Landry continues

parasitoids, even aquatic predators of snails. They range in size from the minute to the very large. Yet, due to the the small size and cryptic habits of the majority, they remain daunting subjects of study. Their phylogeny and classification has and still remains a challenge. Some groups have undergone huge species radiations in particular regions. The global undescribed diversity possibly equals or exceeds that which is described. And who knows what other crazy life styles await discovery!

Several years ago at one of the lepidopterists meetings, I presented a talk on the undescribed diversity of Coleophoridae in North America. At the end of the closing banquet took place the traditional door prize draw with all manners of donated prizes, from Lepidoptera books to collecting equipment, to T-shirts and cards. I won a bumper sticker that says, improbably: “so many species... so little time”! The draw was not rigged. Pure chance! The sticker now ornates my office door.

Hunters with nets

Below: Jean-François Landry at Carcross Dunes in Yukon. Photo by J.-F. Landry

On right: Robert Hoare is teaching Lauri Kaila how to use a net correctly in New Zealand. Photo by Jaakko Kullberg



Fred the Thread

(Batrachedridae *sensu lato*: *Houdinia flexilissima*
Hoare, Dugdale & Watts, 2006)

R. J. B. Hoare

Explanatory notes: Long ago, in the year 2003, young Corinne Watts was studying the stems of giant cane-rushes (*Sporadanthus ferrugineus*) in the Waikato peat-bogs of New Zealand. She chanced upon squiggly lines decorating the stems and wondered who might be the artist responsible. Opening up stem after stem, she discovered amazingly thin, long thread-like larvae of a reddish orange colour, and the legend of Fred the Thread was born. Fred has no legs, but he does have a hinged head-capsule to allow him to eat his way along through the inside of the stem. No entomologist could work out what type of insect the Fred larvae belonged to; lepidopterists thought they were Coleoptera; coleopterists thought they were Diptera; no dipterists could be found to comment, even with the aid of Malaise traps. Eventually Corinne and a lepidopterist colleague reared the beasties through to adulthood, and lo and behold, they were indeed moths (Lepidoptera)!

The moth was named *Houdinia flexilissima* from its very thin flexible larva, and its remarkable escape from the tight confines of the *Sporadanthus* stem.



*I have a friend; his name is Fred;
He's thinner than a cotton thread:
His colour is an orange-red...
He doesn't feed on jam or bread
But Sporadanthus stems instead.
Such narrow tunnels must he tread
He needs a hinge inside his head
To give his jaws the room to shred
The food that is his home and bed,
To keep his tiny tummy fed
And stop himself from dropping dead.*

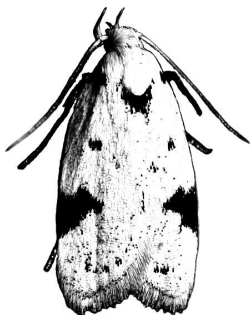
[A longer version of this poem appears in Hoare, R. J. B. (2008) *Six-legged Things and Scaly Wings*. Magnolia Press. 100 pp.]

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Fred the Thread Houdinia flexilissima as a larva (on left) and adult (above) Photos by Birgit Rhode



A Review of *Inga* Busck (Oecophoridae)

Richard L. Brown

Busck (1908) described *Inga* (Oecophoridae) to include a single species, *Anesychia sparsiciliella* Clemens, a species that serves as the logo for I.N.G.A. and this newsletter. *Inga* was synonymized with *Cryptolechia* by Meyrick (1922), but was resurrected by Clarke (1941) who added five additional species from North America to the genus and illustrated genitalia of all the species. Hodges (1972) synonymized several genera described by Meyrick with *Inga* and transferred 77 South American species into the genus, most of which had been described in *Machimia* Clemens or *Atelosticha* Meyrick. Clarke (1963) included many of these species in *Himmacia* Clarke in his catalogue of type specimens that included figures of the imago and genitalia. The most recent treatment of species in American north of Mexico (Hodges 1974) includes descriptions of two new species and figures of all imagoes.

The genus has been defined by a combination of characters of the male genitalia, including a sacculus with a distal process that extends to or beyond the costal margin, a well-developed gnathos that lacks spines or scobinations, and a triangular uncus (Hodges 1974). The valvae in most species have a characteristic shape with the distal portion lobe-like and narrower than the sacculus.

Inga (Oecophoridae) is restricted to the New World and is primarily a Neotropical group. Becker (1984), accessible at Brown and Lee (2009), lists 98 species that occur from Mexico through Central America to Argentina, of which *I. sparsiciliella* is the only one that also occurs in the

United States. Of the eight species occurring in the United States, primarily the Southwest, hosts are known for only one species. *I. concolorella* (Beutenmüller) (Fig. 1) has been reared from roots of the composite shrubs *Isocoma tenuisecta* (Rose & Standl.) in Arizona and *Gutierrezia* species in California (Hodges 1974, Powell & Opler 2009). Powell and Opler reported that the *Inga* larvae live in feeding galleries of larvae of tortricid moths and cerambycid beetles where they presumably feed on detritus and fungal mycelia.

The ecology and biology of *Inga* species in the cerrado of Brazil have been treated by Bendicho-Lopez *et al.* (2006), Diniz and Morais (1997), Diniz *et al.* (2007), Flinte *et al.* (2006), Monteiro *et al.* (2007) and others. Dinez *et al.* (2007) reared 15 species of *Inga* from 36 host species in 21 plant families, but only six of the moth species could be identified: *I. haemataula* (Meyrick), *I. phaeocrossa*



Fig. 1. *Inga concolorella* collected by Don Wright in Colorado, Weld Co., 40°13'53"N 104°11'53"W, August 7, 1996. Photo by Richard L. Brown

(Meyrick), *I. ancorata* (Walsingham), *I. corystes* (Meyrick), *I. encamina* (Meyrick), and *I. erythema* (Walsingham). *Inga phaeocrossa* and *I. haemataula* were found to be the most abundant species among all host plants and to be polyphagous on the host plants surveyed. *Inga inflammata* (Meyrick) has been reared from *Byrsonima sericea* Dc., feeding on a tangle of dried leaves, the latter often produced by *Gonioterma indecora* (Zeller) (Elachistidae) (Flinte *et al.* 2006). *Inga crossota* (Walsingham) has been reported as a leaf feeder on mango, *Mangifera indica* L. (Ribeiro 1951).

According to Diniz *et al.* (2007) early instars of all species build shelters with mature leaves reaching senescence or even dry. Shelters were composed of two leaves tied together, open at both ends, and lined with a layer of frass intertwined with silk. Interestingly, mature larvae forage outside the leaf shelter. Caterpillars reacted to disturbance by wiggling out of the shelter and dropping by silken threads. Pupation occurs within cut spheres of the leaf that make an envelope-like structure within the leaf shelter. Flight periods of adults are highest from April to July.

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A new *Aristotelia* from the Monahans Sandhills in Texas

Richard L. Brown and Sangmi Lee

In August 2011 Sangmi and I were traveling on Interstate-20 southwest of Midland, Texas on our way to the Lepidoptera Course at the Southwest Research Station in Arizona. We drove through a landscape dominated by mesquite to enter the Permian Basin, a geologically unique area that is now dominated by thousands of oil wells. As we drove towards the town of Monahans, we began passing sand dunes covered with a diversity of flowers and vegetation that we had not seen before.

Not having time to spend an extra night, I told Sangmi that we needed to return because this inland dune habitat was sure to have some interesting species.

In August 2012 while returning to the Lepidoptera Course, I planned for an extra night to collect in these dunes. I did not obtain a permit for collecting in Monahans Sandhills State Park (Fig. 1), but I stopped at the park to see the interesting exhibits at



Fig. 1. Dunes of Monahans Sandhills that are stabilized by vegetation. Photo by Mark W. Lockwood.

Unique Habitats

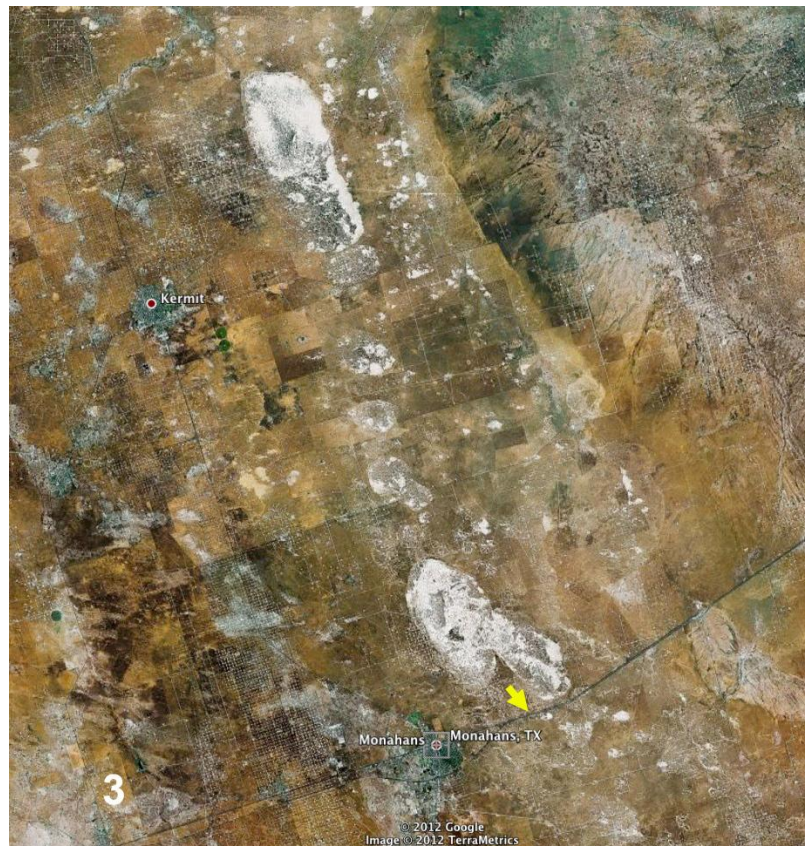


Fig. 2. An apparently undescribed *Aristotelia* species collected in Monahans Sandhills. Photo by Sangmi Lee

the Visitor's Center and to take a mid-afternoon walk through the dunes. The hike was rather brief because the 42°C (108°F) ambient temperature, amplified by the reflecting white sand, was not only uncomfortable, but must have been a factor in the lack of insect activity at this time of day. I then explored the roads around the periphery of the park to find a spot to set my bucket light trap. I found a good spot to place the trap at 31°36'44"N 102°49'56"W. This site was located in some small dunes that were adjacent to the Park and separated from the Interstate by an adjacent state highway and an elevated railroad track.

The next morning I retrieved the trap to find it moderately filled with moths. After putting on my head magnifier to sort the micro's, I was shocked to see many specimens of a moth that were red, black and white with silver spots and bands, one of the most striking gelechiids that I have seen from North America (Fig. 2). It was obviously a species of *Aristotelia*, but unlike any known species and is presumed to be undescribed.

Fig. 3. Aerial view of Monahans Sandhills by Google/Terrametrics. Collecting site indicated by arrow.



The Monahans Sandhills have been described by Machenberg (1984). They extend about 200 miles from Monahans, Texas northwestward into New Mexico (Fig 3). The dunes are stabilized by shin oak (*Quercus havardii* Rydb.), which only grows about five feet high when mature but has roots reaching down to groundwater. Many species of insects are known to be endemic to the Monahans sandhills, including seven species of beetles (Quinn 2011). More field work in other sandhills in southwestern United States is needed to determine the distribution of this species of *Aristotelia*.

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Entomological Society of America Annual Meeting – November 11-14, 2012

This year's meeting featured the symposium "Update on *Tuta absoluta*, the Tomato Leafminer" as well as submitted presentations on ecology, physiology and pest management of this pest now introduced into Europe from South America. Other contributions relating to Gelechioidea included presentations on a faunistics study of the Gelechioidea in the Black Belt Prairie in Mississippi (**Richard Brown, Sangmi Lee, and David Polck**), a phylogenetics analysis of North American *Exaeretia* (Elachistidae) (**Melissa Sisson and Sibyl Bucheli**), a phylogenetics analysis of *Agonopterix* (Elachistidae) (**Robert Samuel de Moya and Sibyl Bucheli**), and a study of the biology and biomass impact of *Blastobasis repartella* (Blastobasidae, but titled Coleophoridae) (**Veronica Calles Torrez**).



Future Meetings:

Annual Meeting of the Lepidopterists' Society

(jointly with Southern Lepidopterists' Society and the Association for Tropical Lepidoptera)

Scheduled for June 27-30, 2013 at University of Florida in Gainesville, FL. More details available at http://www.lepsoc.org/2013_meeting.php

XVIIIth European Congress of Lepidopterology

Scheduled for July 29 – August 4, 2013 at Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. More details available at <http://www.socourlep.eu/index.php?id=4>

I.N.G.A. 1 - 2012

Combined Annual Meeting of the Lepidopterists' Society and the Societas Europaea

Lepidopterologica – July 23-29, 2012

Four presentations relating to Gelechioidea were given at the meeting. These included two talks on the Hawaiian fancy-cased caterpillars *Hyposmocoma* (Cosmopterigidae), the first on the evolution of carnivory in this genus (**William Haines, Zachary Williams, Akito Kawahara, Patrick Schmitz & Daniel Rubinoff**) and the second on timing the explosive radiation in fancy-cased caterpillars (**Daniel Rubinoff & Patrick Schmitz**). The other presentations were on testing six different methods to delimit species in three gelechioid subfamilies, Elachistinae, Gelechiinae and Hypertrophiinae (**Mari Kekkonen, Lauri Kaila, Marko Mutanen & Paul Hebert**) and on the thus far largest phylogenetic study aiming at a revised classification for Gelechioidea (**Maria Heikkilä, Marko Mutanen, Mari Kekkonen & Lauri Kaila**).



Meetings



Setting up light traps and sheets in Roggen sandhills, Weld county



Gelechioid and other aficionados:

Todd Gilligan, Felix Sperling, Dan Rubinoff, John Brown and Jerry Powell (behind)

Shots from Combined Annual Meeting of the Lepidopterists' Society and the Societas Europaea Lepidopterologica, Denver, Colorado U.S.A. 2012

The meeting in Denver had the honour to act as a birth place of new-born I.N.G.A. A group of enthusiastic gelechioid researchers including Richard Brown, Maria Heikkilä, Robert Hoare, Mari Kekkonen, Jean-François Landry and Sangmi Lee decided to combine their strengths and bravely follow the path guided by The Pyraloid Planet and TORTS newsletters.

The crew of I.N.G.A.:

Mari Kekkonen, Maria Heikkilä & Sangmi Lee



All photos by Mari Kekkonen



Richard Brown (on right), another member of I.N.G.A. team, with nepticulid specialist Erik van Nieukerken

Compiled by Maria Heikkilä & Richard Brown

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Loan and Exchange Requests

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Have you seen moths looking like this located in your collections?

Mari Kekkonen (mari.kekkonen @ helsinki.fi) would appreciate enormously all knowledge on these Papua New Guinean moths belonging to the subfamily Hypertrophinae. She is working on a PhD thesis of the systematics and taxonomy of hypertrophines in Finnish Museum of Natural History.

Exchange of Gelechioids

The Mississippi Entomological Museum is interested in exchanging gelechioids and other micros in our collection for species occurring throughout the world. We are especially interested in obtaining representatives of genera that do not occur in the U.S. A list of our gelechioid holdings can be accessed by entering the family name in the browse function of our data base:

<http://www.mississippientomologicalmuseum.org.msstate.edu/collection/mem/>.

Please contact Richard Brown [rbrown @ entomology.msstate.edu](mailto:rbrown@entomology.msstate.edu) for potential exchanges.



*I.N.G.A. at the beginning of a long road..
Photo taken in Australia by Mari Kekkonen*

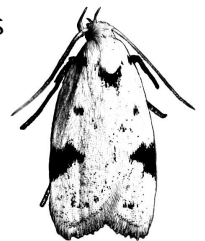
The next issue of I.N.G.A. will be distributed in spring 2013.

Stay tuned!

I.N.G.A. Newsletter

I.N.G.A. is a biannually distributed electronic newsletter with its main focus on different aspects of the superfamily Gelechioidea. Subscription and all contributions are free of charge. All opinions presented here are authors' own and do not represent an official opinion of the newsletter. Guidelines for submission and previous issues of I.N.G.A. can be found from the newsletter's website:

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