

Case 2550**ETHMIIDAE Busck, 1909 (Insecta, Lepidoptera): proposed precedence over AZINIDAE Walsingham, 1906**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the long established and widely used moth family name ETHMIIDAE Busck, 1909. The older name AZINIDAE Walsingham, 1906, intended for some species now considered to be congeneric with the type genus of ETHMIIDAE, has not been used since its original publication.

1. *Ethmia* was proposed by Hübner ([1819] p. 163, as 'Ethmiae') as a monotypic genus for *Phalaena pyrausta* Hübner, [1819] (p. 163) (= *aurifluella* Hübner, 1825), a European species. During the late 19th century the species now assigned to *Ethmia* were associated with the YPONOMEUTIDAE (= HYPONOMEUTIDAE) on the basis of superficial resemblances.

2. *Azinis* was proposed by Walker (1863, p. 541) as a monotypic genus for his new species *Azinis hilarella* Walker, 1863 from Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and was assigned to the family HYPONOMEUTIDAE.

3. Fundamental differences that are reflected in the present superfamily separation of Yponomeutoidea and Gelechioidea were recognised by von Heinemann (1870, p. 137), who placed *Ethmia* (as *Psecadia*) in the GELECHIIDAE, but this concept was not followed generally until the turn of the century. Within the Gelechioidea ethmiids were assigned to the OECOPHORIDAE (e.g. Meyrick, 1895, p. 630; Dyar, 1902, p. 523).

4. The name AZINIDAE was established by Walsingham (1906, p. 177) when it was mentioned in a critique of a discussion by Busck (1906, p. 728) of *Tamarrha* Walker, 1864 and *Babaiaxa* Busck, 1902, which include West Indian and Central American species now assigned to *Ethmia*. Lord Walsingham stated, 'I would now rather incline to placing *Tamarrha* with the AZINIDAE, founded on an Asiatic genus and characterised by the continuation of the discoidal vein direct to vein 8.' This seems to imply that AZINIDAE, with *Azinis* Walker as its type genus, had been established elsewhere, but no such reference is known. Walsingham did not further characterize the family or distinguish it from the OECOPHORIDAE or mention other included genera.

5. Busck (1909, p. 91) formally proposed ETHMIIDAE as a new family and distinguished it from OECOPHORIDAE, claiming that such treatment had been inadvertently omitted from a taxonomic revision of North American oecophorid genera which he had published a year earlier (Busck, 1908, p. 187). He did not mention AZINIDAE, but stated that *Azinis* and *Tamarrha* differ from *Ethmia* only in secondary sexual characters and therefore must be included in *Ethmia*. Curiously, Walsingham (1912, p. 143) in the next major faunal-taxonomic treatment, the *Biologia-Centrali Americana*, followed

Busck's rather than his own earlier family proposal, using the spelling ETHMIADAE. Here he gave a formal synonymy under *Ethmia*, listing *Anesychia*, *Azinis*, *Psecadia*, *Babaiaxa*, *Tamarrha* and others but he did not mention AZINIDAE. Presumably he had either forgotten his informal mention of the family, issued in the haste of the moment of a critical rebuttal, or he may have considered ETHMIIDAE to be more appropriate because *Azinis* was considered a synonym and/or ETHMIIDAE had been formally proposed and described.

6. Subsequent authors, excepting those who continued to list *Ethmia* without a subfamilial category in either the OECOPHORIDAE or HYPONOMEUTIDAE, have all used ETHMIIDAE or ETHMIINAE for the family-group designation. A list of 21 comprehensive references, representing most of the major biogeographic regions of the world, which have used ETHMIIDAE rather than AZINIDAE is held by the Commission Secretariat. The Zoological Record began using ETHMIIDAE in 1950 as a separate family in its systematic index; prior to that, *Ethmia* and the other genera discussed here were listed under TINEIDAE (s.l.). I have seen no examples in which AZINIDAE was substituted for ETHMIIDAE after the latter was established.

7. Both Sattler (1967, p. 9) and Powell (1973, p. 54), in the major taxonomic revisions of Palearctic and New World ethmiids, listed AZINIDAE in the synonymy of ETHMIIDAE. Because AZINIDAE had not been used as the valid name during the preceding 50 years, I considered it to be a nomen oblitum that could be rejected by the Commission (1961 Code, Art. 23b) although I did not formally request such action. If we knew that Walsingham (1912, p. 143) had replaced AZINIDAE with ETHMIIDAE because of the synonymy of *Azinis* with *Ethmia*, Art. 40b would apply, because ETHMIIDAE has won general acceptance and no action by the Commission would be necessary. However, Walsingham (1912) did not mention AZINIDAE, and it seems best to clarify the matter by use of the plenary powers. Zimmerman (1978, p. 921) also discussed the situation and noted that 'it would appear less confusing and a contribution to stability if we continue to use Ethmiinae and suppress Azinidae'.

8. The advantages of conserving ETHMIIDAE as a family-group name are (a) to enhance stability and universality — this name has been used continuously for 80 years and has been applied in essentially all biogeographic regions, and (b) to retain *Ethmia* as the type genus of the family-group — this genus is worldwide in distribution and contains most of the species considered to comprise this family-group.

9. AZINIDAE Walsingham, 1906 cannot be suppressed as a family-group name without suppressing its type genus *Azinis* Walker, 1863. About 47 groups of species have been defined to accommodate the 200+ species of Palearctic, New World and Australian *Ethmia* (Powell, 1973, 1985; Sattler, 1967). *Ethmia hilarella*, the type species of *Azinis*, is a member of the Nigroapicella group (Sattler, 1967) and *Azinis* is the earliest available generic name in that group. Considering the morphological diversity displayed in *Ethmia*, it is realistic to suppose that eventually it will be subdivided, and it is possible that 'taxonomic inflation' will dictate tribal or even subfamilial groupings among the resultant genera.

10. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to rule that the family-group name ETHMIIDAE Busck, 1909, is to be given precedence over the name AZINIDAE Walsingham, 1906, whenever the two are considered synonyms;

- (2) to place the following names on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology:
- (a) *Ethmia* Hübner, [1819], (gender: feminine), type species by monotypy, *Phalaena pyrausta* Hübner [1819];
 - (b) *Azinis* Walker, 1863, (gender: feminine), type species by monotypy, *Azinis hilarella* Walker, 1863;
- (3) to place the following names on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology:
- (a) *pyrausta* Hübner, [1819], as published in the binomen *Phalaena pyrausta*, specific name of the type species of *Ethmia* Hübner, 1819;
 - (b) *hilarella* Walker, 1863, as published in the binomen *Azinis hilarella*, specific name of the type species of *Azinis* Walker, 1863;
- (4) to place the following names on the Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology:
- (a) ETHMIIDAE Busck, 1909 (type genus *Ethmia* Hübner, 1819) with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over AZINIDAE Walsingham, 1906 (type genus *Azinis* Walker, 1819) whenever the two names are considered synonyms.
 - (b) AZINIDAE Walsingham, 1906 (type genus *Azinis* Walker, 1863) with the endorsement that it is not to be given precedence over ETHMIIDAE Busck, 1909 (type genus *Ethmia* Hübner, 1819) whenever the two names are considered synonyms.

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