

TAXONOMIC HISTORY

Distant (1893) erected the genus *Ranzovius* to accommodate his new species *crinitus* described from Guerrero and Veracruz, Mexico; Carvalho and Dolling (1976) selected a female from Omilteme, Guerrero as the lectotype. Reuter (1905) described *Nyctella moerens* from Venezuela and (1908) *Nyctella lunifera* from Puebla, Mexico. Carvalho (1954) synonymized *Nyctella* Reuter, transferred both of Reuter's species to *Ranzovius* and placed *lunifera* in synonymy under *crinitus*. Van Duzee (1917) described *Excentricus californicus* from Placer Co., California and (1923) *Excentricus mexicanus* from Francisquita Bay, Lower California. Blatchley (1926) reported *mexicanus* (in *Excentricus*) from Florida, providing the only eastern U. S. record for the genus. Carvalho (1954) described *Ranzovius fennahi* from Trinidad, and later (1955a) transferred both of Van Duzee's species to *Ranzovius*, synonymizing them under *moerens*. Knight (1968) reported *moerens* from Arizona and Texas.

***Ranzovius* Distant**

Ranzovius Distant, 1893: 422. Type-species: *Ranzovius crinitus* Distant, 1893: 422 (Monobasic).

Nyctella Reuter, 1905: 35. Type-species: *Nyctella moerens* Reuter, 1905: 35 (Monobasic) (Synonymized by Carvalho, 1954: 95).

Diagnosis.—Small, length 1.8–2.7 mm, dark colored, clothed with simple setae, intermixed on dorsum and pleural areas of thorax with recumbent, silvery, silky setae; head broader than long, produced in front of eyes; eyes finely pubescent, touching anterior margin of pronotum; rostrum reaching metacoxae or beyond; antennae stout, segment I shortest and thickened, II longest and swollen in both sexes, subequal to or greater than thickness of segment I, slightly greater than, to shorter than, width of head; pronotum trapeziform, scutellum equilateral; hemelytra entire, membrane with 2 closed cells; claws phyline, without fleshy parempodia.

Remarks.—The genus *Ranzovius* can be keyed in Blatchley (1926) [as *Excentricus* Van Duzee not Reuter] or Slater and Baranowski (1978) based on the claws, the silky pubescence, the length of thickened 2nd antennal segments, and by the head that is produced in front of the eyes. Because the silky pubescence was not a known character for the genus, Carvalho's (1955b) key will not work in the final couplet containing *Ranzovius*.

It has been suggested that the claws of certain spider web-inhabiting insects, including members of the genus *Ranzovius*, are specialized for walking on spider webs. Davis and Russell (1969) described that the claws of *R. californicus* [as *R. moerens*—see discussion of *R. californicus*] can be held down, parallel to the tarsus, for walking on top of spider webs or almost perpendicular for hanging under the webs. They also noted a ridge [unguitractor plate] at the base of the claws, suggesting a further adaptation for movement in webs.

Contrary to Davis and Russell's (1969) suggestion that the claws of *R. californicus* are modified for walking in webs, I find that there is little observable morphological difference in *Ranzovius contubernalis* claws (Fig. 16) compared to the claws of other genera or even subfamilies of the Miridae. Scanning electron microscopy shows that while the claws of *Ranzovius* (Fig. 16) are much less curved than in some taxa, they are quite similar to the claw micrographs provided by