

Interim report on the project to study the tachinid fauna of Khuzestan, Iran

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Over the past two years, we have assembled a sizable collection of flies from the Karkheh and Dez national parks situated in the southwestern province of Khuzestan, Iran. The Khuzestan Plain borders Iraq (Mesopotamia) on the west and Persian Gulf on the south (Fig. 1) and is one of the richest agricultural areas in Iran. The area is generally hot and humid during the summer and is irrigated by several large permanent rivers including the Karkheh and Dez rivers (Figs. 3–6). We have been running Malaise traps (Fig. 2) throughout the parks from early March through August since 2013. Up to now about 600 tachinid specimens have been collected and they are housed mainly in the Hayk Mirzayans Insect Museum, Tehran, Iran (HMIM), with a few reference specimens in the Museum of Natural History, Leibniz-Institute for Research on Evolution and Biodiversity, Berlin, Germany (ZMHB) and in the private collection of Joachim Ziegler, Bernau, Germany (CZB).

To date we have identified 31 tachinid genera in four subfamilies of Exoristinae (18 genera), Tachininae (7 genera), Phasiinae (4 genera) and Dexiinae (2 genera). The discovery of an undescribed species of the genus *Minthodes* Brauer & Bergenstamm (Fig. 7) in our study area, which is closely related to *M. brevipennis* (Brauer & Bergenstamm), led us to review the genus and provide a key to the *Minthodes* species in Iran (Gilasian *et al.* under revision). We have also found several other

undescribed species in the subfamilies Exoristinae and Tachininae and plan to publish our results in a series of future papers.

This project is in line with our continuing research on the tachinid fauna of Iran (Gilasian *et al.* 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b) and is being funded by the Iranian Department of Environment and the Iranian Research Institute of Plant Protection.



Figure 1. Map of Iran with the boundary of the province of Khuzestan outlined in purple.



Figures 2–7. 2. Malaise trap in Karkheh National Park, province of Khuzestan, Iran (7 March 2015). 3–6. Views of Karkheh National Park (photos by Farshad Eskandari). 7. Adult male of an undescribed *Minthodes* species from Karkheh National Park.

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