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DISCOVERY OF THE FAMILY ELACATIDAE (=OTHNIIDAE), COLEOPTERA FROM INDIA WITH DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES OF *ELACATIS*

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ABSTRACT. The family Elacatidae is recorded for the first time from West Bengal, India and a new species, *Elacatis bengalensis*, is described.

Borchmann (1910) listed two genera *Elacatis* Pascoe (= *Othnius* LeConte) and *Ababa* Casey under the family Elacatidae (= Othniidae). Crowson (1955) excluded the genus *Ababa* from this family (Arnett, 1968, placed it under the family Cleridae), and transferred the genera *Aegialites* Mannerheim, *Prostomina* Reitter, *Trogocryptus* Sharp and *Othniocryptus* Sharp from the families Aegialitidae, Cucujidae and Cryptophagidae respectively to the family Elacatidae. Later, Sen Gupta and Crowson (1971) placed the genus *Othniocryptus* under the family Languriidae. The family Elacatidae was not recorded from India. The author has discovered a species of *Elacatis* for the first time from India from a collection made during 1976 by a survey party of Zoological Survey of India, led by A.R. Bhaumik to Sikkim and Darjeeling District, and which is described below as new. So far, fifteen species of *Elacatis* are known from warmer parts of North and Central America, Borneo, Japan, Bataavia and Ceylon. The genus *Elacatis* can be easily recognised by its shape being typical tiger-beetle-like (Fig. 1), front coxae projecting, closely situated and its cavities externally closed behind, middle coxal cavities closed outwardly by sterna, prothorax quadrate, tarsal formula 5-5-4 in both sexes, and elytra entire but apex of abdomen exposed.

Elacatis bengalensis, sp. nov. (Fig. 1)

General appearance (Fig. 1): Elongate, depressed, narrowed posteriorly, dorsal surface densely punctured and pubescent.

Head transversely triangular, dorsal surface black, shining, coarsely and uniformly punctured, pubescence moderately long, whitish, recumbent, directed in front and somewhat towards middle line and arranged in patches. Eyes markedly large, black and finely faceted. Antennal insertions completely hidden under projections of frons. Antennae black, scape moderately large, elongate and narrowed at apex, pedicel short and slightly paler, joint 3 narrow, strongly elongate and as long as joints 4 and 5 together, joints 4 and 5 equal and broadly elongate, joints 6-8 shorter than joint 5 and somewhat globular, club 3-jointed, loose, joints 9 and 10 equal and as long as broad, joint 11 elongate and

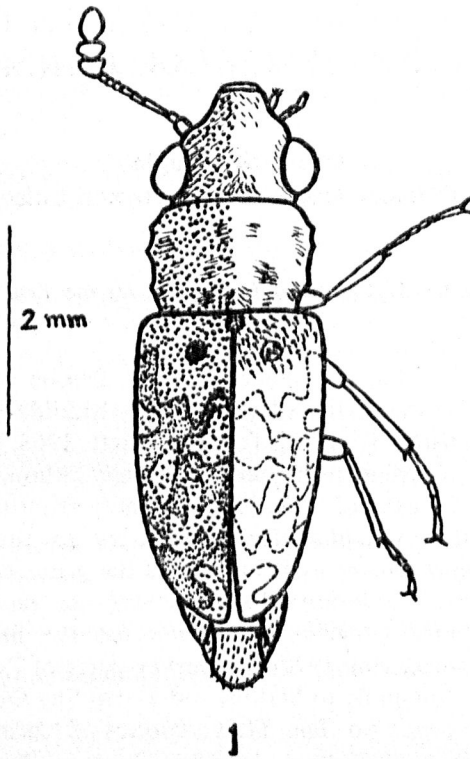


Fig. 1. *Elacatis bengalensis*, sp. nov.

narrowed at apex. Maxillary palpi with segments 2 and 3 reddish brown and segment 4 black, elongate and slightly narrowed in front and behind. Prothorax slightly transverse, narrowed in front and more so posteriorly, lateral margin with three distinct teeth, front angles not prominent and obtuse, hind angle prominent and somewhat acute. Pronotum black, uniformly and coarsely punctured but slightly sparser than that of vertex of head, pubescence similar as in vertex of head, arranged in patches and directed towards middle line. Scutellum black, small, narrowed in front and rounded posteriorly, densely punctured and pubescent. Elytra broadest in front and narrowed posteriorly, humeral angles prominent, dorsal surface yellowish brown with characteristic black patches (Fig. 1), puncturation moderately coarse, uniform and sparser than that of pronotum, pubescence yellowish moderately long, recumbent, dense, and directed posteriorly and slightly outwards. Exposed part of abdomen black and densely pubescent. Ventral surface black, moderately densely punctured and pubescent. Legs long, slender and black, except for basal and apical part of femora and tibiae, and tarsi, which are reddish brown.

Measurements of holotype: Total length 5.75 mm, width of head across eyes 1.50 mm, length of antenna 1.40 mm, width of prothorax across middle 1.50 mm, length of elytra 2.90 mm and width across front margin 1.70 mm.

Holotype 1 ex. and *paratype* 1 ex., INDIA: WEST BENGAL: Darjeeling District, Rangpo, 450 m, 22. iv, 1976, under bark of *Ailanthus grandis*, coll. A. R. Bhaumik. (In Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta).

This species can be easily separated from North American species *Elacatis umbrosus* LeConte, Ceylonese species *E. lyencea* Pascoe, Batchian species *E. laticollis* Pascoe and Indonesian species *E. delusa* Pascoe, by the lateral margin of prothorax being slightly curved, with three distinct dentations, and its posterior part not rounded or emarginate.

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