

MEYRICK'S RECORD OF "*MECYNA FURNACALIS*, GN." FROM  
FIJI, WITH A NEW GENERIC ASSIGNMENT FOR  
*PYRAUSTA HOMALOXANTHA* MEYRICK  
(PYRALIDAE: PYRAUSTINAE)

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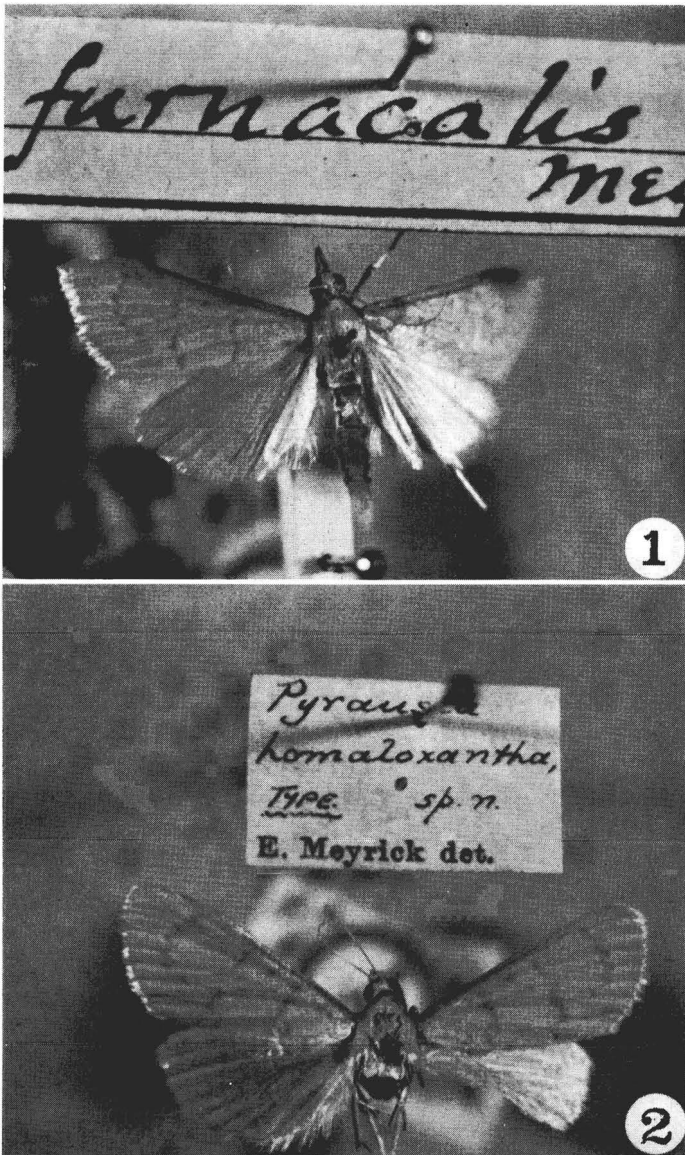
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**ABSTRACT.** Meyrick's record of *Mecyna furnacalis* (Guenée) from Fiji belongs not to Guenée's species—described in *Botys* and now placed in *Ostrinia*—but to *Pyrausta homaloxantha* Meyrick, described in 1933 from Fiji. This species is transferred to *Xanthopsamma* Munroe and Mutuura, a genus previously known from three species from Japan, Korea, mainland China and Hainan. Figures of male and female moths and genitalia are given and differential characters are noted. The apparent isolation of the Fijian species may not be significant, as other species are likely to turn up in the Indo-Papuan region.

Meyrick (1886: 264) identified a male and a female moth from Fiji as *Botys furnacalis* Guenée, 1854: 332, and transferred the species to "*Mecyna*, Gn.," saying, "This species agrees well enough with Guenée's description, but as that is in some respects incomplete, I have redescribed it to prevent error. . . . Guenée's type is stated to be from Australia, but I think this is probably an error, and may be neglected until confirmed."

Mr. Michael Shaffer has called our attention to a male specimen from Fiji in the British Museum (Natural History), which for many years was labelled "Type" over the name label "*furnacalis* Meyr." This is evidently the male recorded by Meyrick (1886), as we have been unable to trace any *furnacalis* named by Meyrick. Meyrick's identification, which we overlooked when we referred *Botys furnacalis* Guenée to *Ostrinia* in our revision of that genus (Mutuura and Munroe, 1970: 33), is erroneous. We consider the specimen conspecific with *Pyrausta homaloxantha* Meyrick (1933: 411), described from a female holotype from Vunidawa, Fiji, in the British Museum (Natural History). The maculation is virtually identical in the two specimens (Figs. 1, 2), the localities agree sufficiently, and as will be shown, the genital characters of the two sexes are concordant.

The species is not properly referable to *Pyrausta* Schrank, 1802, (= *Botys* Latreille, 1802-1803), to *Mecyna* Doubleday, 1850, to *Mecyna* in the sense of Guenée, 1854, (= *Uresiphita* Hübner, [1825]) or to *Ostrinia* Hübner, [1825], all of which differs more or less widely in genital characters (see Munroe, 1950, 1976). Instead, the species is



Figs. 1, 2. *Xanthopsamma homaloxantha* (Meyrick), specimens in British Museum (Natural History). 1, ♂, so-called type of "*furnacalis* Meyr."; 2, ♀, holotype of *Pyrausta homaloxantha* Meyrick.

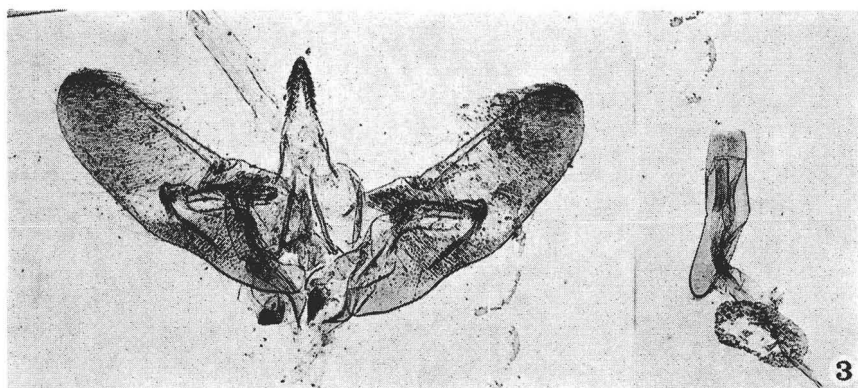


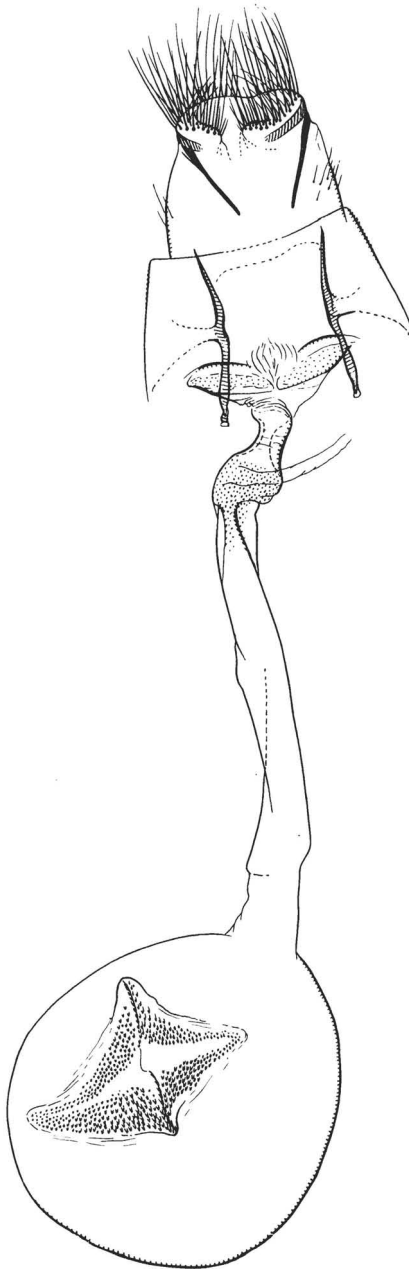
Fig. 3. *Xanthopsamma homaloxantha* (Meyrick), ♂ genitalia of specimen illustrated in Fig. 1.

clearly a member of the genus *Xanthopsamma* Munroe and Mutuura, 1968, previously known from a complex of three species from Japan, Korea, mainland China and Hainan. The Fijian species agrees in external structural characters and in the essentials of male and female genitalia with the type-species, *X. aurantialis* Munroe and Mutuura, 1968, and its previously recognized relatives.

In maculation *X. homaloxantha* (Meyrick), n. comb., differs from its temperate east Asian congeners in its yellower forewing, without terminal infuscation, with finer but more distinct transverse lines, and with relatively weaker discocellular bar, and in the contrastingly whitish-yellow, not almost concolorous buff or fulvous hindwing, without post-medial line or terminal infuscation. The termen of the forewing is less strongly curved than in the previously included species and the wing consequently appears wider and its apex sharper.

The male genitalia (Fig. 3) are closely similar to those of *X. aurantialis* and *X. youboialis*, but have the uncus relatively narrower and sharper, the dorsal prominence of the sacculus longer and more gradually rounded, and the spinulose zone at the base of the basally directed lobe of the clasper somewhat wider. The female genitalia (Fig. 4) resemble those of *X. aurantialis*, but have the tapering part of the ostial chamber shorter and separated from the collar of the *ductus bursae* by a narrow unsclerotized zone, and have the signum relatively larger.

At present no great significance should be attached to the apparent wide disjunction in the geographical range of the genus, as further species may well exist in tropical Asia and Melanesia.



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Fig. 4. *Xanthopsamma homaloxantha* (Meyrick), ♀ genitalia of holotype (see Fig. 2).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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SCREECH OWL PREYS ON *PERIDOMA PLECTA* (NOCTUIDAE)

As part of a long term study of populations and mortality of the Screech Owl (*Otus asio*) I collected a vehicle killed specimen near Oxford, Connecticut on 4 May 1976. Routine measurements were taken and stomach contents analyzed. Eight larvae of the Flame-shouldered Dart, *Peridroma plecta* L. (Noctuidae) were found among the owl's stomach contents. The *P. plecta* larvae were fresh and readily identifiable, suggesting that the owl was killed shortly after feeding, but before digestion had begun. Although Bent (1938, U.S. Nat. Hist. Mus. Bull. 168. 482 p.) and others have recorded a variety of Lepidopteran adults and larvae as occasional Screech Owl prey, this constitutes the first record of such for noctuid species. This observation indicates the susceptibility of noctuid larvae to efficient nocturnal predators. It also provides absolute evidence that at least one species of large, avian raptor will feed opportunistically on available insect larvae.

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