



A new species of satyrine butterfly from Patagonia in more than a century and revisional notes on the genus *Faunula* C. Felder & R. Felder (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae: Satyrinae)

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Abstract

A new species of Satyrinae butterfly, *Faunula dubii* n. sp., is described from southern Patagonia in Chile and Argentina. Its affinities with other species of the genus *Faunula* C. & R. Felder are evaluated, and its distribution and habitat are discussed. A new combination *Faunula euripides* n. comb., and a new synonymy are proposed, *Punargenteus penai* Hayward n. syn. of *Satyrus gustavi* (Staudinger). Generic status of *Chillanella stelligera* (Butler) is reconsidered. All the species of Satyrinae occurring in southern Patagonia are listed.

Key words: Argentina, *Faunula dubii* n. sp., *Faunula euripides* n. comb., Patagonian steppe, Pronophilina, taxonomy

Introduction

Southern Patagonia comprises the eastern part of the Chilean regions of Magallanes and Aisén, and the Argentinean provinces of Santa Cruz and southern Chubút. This ecoregion extends roughly from the mid-Andean Precordillera southward, ending just north of the Straights of Magellan, with the Peninsula de Valdés as its north-eastern outlier. Its climate is dry and cold with snow during the winter and frosts nearly year-round. Annual precipitation does not normally average more than 200 mm. Main vegetation type is semi-desert steppe and grass steppe bordered on the west by the cold temperate forest of the Andes. It transforms to north-west into shrubland steppe and thorn thicket, gradually making the transition to Argentine *monte*. The vegetation is xerophytic and highly adapted for protection against drought, wind and herbivores. Steppe is dominated by *Acantholippia*, *Mulinum spinosum* and *Brachyclados caespitosus* shrubs and tuft grasses of which the most common are *Poa* and *Stipa*. Desert like areas also exist with little to no vegetative cover, as well as wet meadow areas (Davis *et al.* 1997).

Butterflies were collected in southern Patagonia as early as mid-nineteen century in the period of Charles Darwin and the early European scientific exploration of the southern tip of the Americas, with most of the sampling restricted to the Straights of Magellan. Patagonian butterflies taxonomy and ecology was researched rather intensively in the recent decades, with a special emphasis on Pieridae by Shapiro (1990, 1994, 1998), and Lycaenidae by Bálint & Johnson (1995), who described several species of this family, Bálint & Benyamini (2001) and Vila *et al.* (2011). All of the nine species of Satyrinae known from southern Patagonia were however described back in nineteen century by Butler (1868, 1881), Mabille (1885), Blanchard (1852), C. & R. Felder (1867) and Guérin-Ménéville [1830]. The most recent description of a Patagonian Satyrinae was a subspecies of *A. chiliensis*—*magallanicus* (Herrera, 1965). *Pamperis poaeneis* (Heimlich, 1959), detected recently in the Argentinian Patagonia, was actually described from the Chilean Araucania. Luis Herrera (1989) was the last author dealing with the taxonomy of Patagonian Satyrinae. The field guide of the butterflies of Chile by Peña & Ugarte (1997) provided no new data and created the impression that the fauna of Satyrinae of Patagonia is all well known. In the last decade, this author and co-workers, Angel Viloría, Pierre Boyer, Dubi Benyamini and Alfredo Ugarte, carried out several trips to the southern tip of Patagonia, critically re-examined the available collections of Satyrinae from Chile and Argentina, and conducted taxonomic research. As a result, several new taxa were identified, including one new species from southern Patagonia, described below.