



Correspondence

An overlooked earlier name for the bird blow fly genus *Protocalliphora* Hough (Diptera: Calliphoridae)

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Protocalliphora, a genus-group name of calliphorid flies proposed by Hough (1899) is a well-known blood-feeding obligate parasite of a number of species of birds throughout the Nearctic and Palaearctic Regions where the larvae attack young birds in their nests sometimes causing death. An excellent comprehensive work on the taxonomy and biologies of the species of the genus was published by Sabrosky *et al.* (1989). Their work treated 26 species in the genus and gave records of more than 140 species of birds recorded as hosts.

While *Protocalliphora* is a long-established and well-known group of flies studied by both entomologists and ornithologists, an earlier proposal of a genus-group name for these flies, *Fisheria*, has apparently been overlooked by workers. I was alerted to it recently by crustacean specialist Martyn E.Y. Low, who found it while searching for names that may have preoccupied the crab genus *Fisheria* Lockington, 1877. Two of the most logical works in which the earlier name should have appeared (Sabrosky, 1956; Sabrosky *et al.*, 1989) curiously failed to make mention of the name by Walsh.

Sabrosky's (1956) work was more on the nomenclatural history of the type species of *Protocalliphora* than it was relating to the nomenclatural history of genus-group names for that group of flies. However, in relating the early history of bird blow flies, Sabrosky *et al.* (1989) did mention the article by Walsh (1866a). In the "Answers to Correspondents" in the 25 June issue of his journal, *The Practical Entomologist*, Benjamin Walsh (1866a: 102) described and discussed the larvae of some flies that were sent to him for identification by the Rev. James B. Fisher of New York. Walsh had initially placed these larvae as members of the "*Oestrus* family". This errant placement was apparently more of a concern to Sabrosky *et al.* than any name Walsh may have given the fly because Sabrosky *et al.* (1989) also mentioned the follow up article in which Walsh (1866b) corrected the placement of these fly larvae in the "*Musca* family in the vicinity of *Musca* or *Sarcophaga*" based on Osten Sacken's advice. Sabrosky *et al.* (1989: 1) then conclude with the statement "Undoubtedly these were larvae of *Protocalliphora*." However, Sabrosky *et al.* (1989) failed to quote what was said by Walsh in the next paragraph, where he actually gave a name to these flies.

After Walsh (1866a: 102) gave characters to describe the larvae in the first paragraph: "You send about a dozen blackish maggots, 1/4 inch long and with the head end tapered to a point, which you say were found attached by their mouths to the body of a half-fledged young swallow...", he gave the estimated placement of them in the second paragraph (which was discussed by Sabrosky *et al.*, 1989), but further stated in the third paragraph: "Most probably these flies will belong to a new and hitherto undescribed genus which, if you should succeed in rearing them, will be very appropriately named '*Fisheria*'." (Fig. 1). The criteria to make the name available in this work are met with the characters given by Walsh, and the name, although proposed conditionally, is available according to Article 15.1 of the ICZN Code (I.C.Z.N., 1999).

Fisheria Walsh, 1866 thus has priority over *Protocalliphora* Hough, 1899 and acceptance of this priority would cause instability of the current usage of the common *Protocalliphora*. This is remedied by action of Reversal of Precedence (Article 23.9). The criteria to enable action of Reversal of Precedence are met by both names. *Fisheria* has not been used as a valid taxon after 1899; and *Protocalliphora* has been used as a valid taxon in at least 25 papers by at least 10 different authors within the last 50 years including the following: Bañbura *et al.* (2004), Bedard & McNeil (1997), Bennett & Whitworth (1991, 1992), Bortolotti (1985), Daoust *et al.* (2012), Dawson *et al.* (2005), Eastman *et al.* (1989), Fair & Miller (1995), Gentes *et al.* (2007), Gold & Dahlston (1983), Hall (1965), Hori *et al.* (1990), Howe (1992), I.C.Z.N. (1990 [Opinion 1618]), Iwasa & Hori (1990), Little (2008), Poole (1996), Puchala (2004), Remeš & Krist (2005), Sabrosky *et al.* (1989), Schumann (1986), Simon *et al.* (2004), Warren (1994), Wesołowski (2001), Whitworth (2003), Whitworth & Bennett (1992), Whitworth *et al.* (2007), and Wittman & Beason (1992). I therefore