

# New status for the tiger beetle *Grammognatha euphratica* (Latreille & Dejean, 1822), formerly included in the genus *Megacephala* Latreille, 1802 (Coleoptera: Cicindelidae: sub-tribe Megacephalina)

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The tiger beetles are usually recognised within the Coleoptera as constituting a separate family of the suborder Adephaga (e.g. Cassola and Schneider, 1997), although some authors continue to treat them as either a subfamily, Cicindelinae (Felix *et al.*, 2009) or as a supertribe, Cicindelitae (Erwin and Sims, 1984) within the ground beetle family Carabidae. Tiger beetles are found on all continents except Antarctica, but most species are found in warmer temperate and tropical regions.

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), less than a dozen species and subspecies of tiger beetles have been noted (Wiesner, 1993; Gillett, 1995; Wiesner, 1996; Cassola and Schneider, 1997), but not all known species have yet been formally recorded (Howarth, B., *pers. comm.*). All UAE species so far known are diurnal tiger beetles belonging to various genera of the nominal tribe Cicindelini, except for a single nocturnal species in the sub-tribe Megacephalina, which was formerly known as *Megacephala* (*Grammognatha*) *euphratica euphratica* Latreille & Dejean, 1822. This former name denoted that the beetle found in the UAE belonged to sub-genus *Grammognatha* Motschoulsky, 1850 and to the nominal sub-species, *euphratica*, and differentiated from the blue, rather than green, sub-species, *euphratica armeniaca* Castelnau, 1834, which is known from Armenia and western parts of Central Asia.

Until recently, *Megacephala* was considered to include seven sub-genera, including *Grammognatha*, but each of these has now been recognised by Naviaux (2007) as a valid genus as follows:

*Megacephala* Latreille, 1802 – species found in open habitats in Africa;

*Metricheila* Thomson, 1857 – a single Neotropical species;

*Phaeoxyantha* Chaudoir, 1850 – South American species;

*Pseudotetracha* Fleutiaux, 1894 – central Australian species;

*Australicapitona* Sumlin, 1992 – coastal Australian species;

*Tetracha* Westwood, 1838 – many species in the New World;

*Grammognatha*, Motschoulsky, 1850 – one Palaearctic (Mediterranean) species.

The sub-tribe Megacephalina now includes these seven genera together with *Aniara* Hope, 1838, *Oxycheila* Dejean, 1825, *Pseudoxycheila* Guérin, 1839 and *Cheiloxia* Guérin, 1855. This change in the status of these groups formalises a situation already followed *de facto* by tiger beetle workers. Within the sub-tribe, *Grammognatha euphratica* (**Fig. 1**) is most closely related to members of the genus *Tetracha*, such as *T. bilunata bilunata* (Klug, 1834) (**Fig. 2**).



Fig 1. *Grammognatha euphratica euphratica* from Ain al-Faydah near Al Ain (Eastern Region, Abu Dhabi emirate); 18 mm.



Fig 2. *Tetracha bilunata bilunata* from Fortaleza (Ceará state, Brazil); 20 mm.

## References

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