

## Genus *Syrmoptera* Karsch, 1895 False Heads

*Entomologische Nachrichten. Berlin* **21**: 308 (289-322).

Type-species: *Syrmoptera melanomitra* Karsch, by original designation.

The genus *Syrmoptera* belongs to the Family Lycaenidae Leach, 1815; Subfamily Polyommatae Swainson, 1827; Tribe Oxyliadini Eliot, 1973. (see Zhang *et al.* 2023. Butterfly Classification and Species Discovery Using Genomics. *The Taxonomic Report of the International Lepidoptera Survey* **11** (3): 40-41). The other genus in the Tribe Oxyliadini in the Afrotropical Region is *Oxylides*.

*Syrmoptera* (**False Heads**) is a purely Afrotropical genus containing six species. The genus was revised by Libert in 2004. The genus *Syrmoptera* is are closely related to the genus *Oxylides*, but the underside pattern is rather different.

### \**Syrmoptera amasa* (Hewitson, [1869])

White False Head

*Myrina amasa* Hewitson, [1869]. In Hewitson, [1862-78]. *Illustrations of diurnal lepidoptera. Lycaenidae*. **1**: 4 (1-228; **2**: 95 pp.; **Supplement**: 1-48.). London.

*Syrmoptera amasa* Hewitson, 1869. d'Abrera, 2009: 698.

**Type locality**: Nigeria: "Old Calabar".

**Diagnosis**: See *Syrmoptera bonifacei*.

**Distribution**: Nigeria (east and Cross River loop), Cameroon, Gabon, Angola (Mendes *et al.*, 2018).

**Specific localities**:

Nigeria – Old Calabar (TL); Onitsha (Larsen, 2005a); Oban Hills (Larsen, 2005a).

Cameroon – Korup (Larsen, 2005a).

Gabon – Kinguele (Vande weghe, 2010); Tchimbele (Vande weghe, 2010).

**Habitat**: Forest.

**Habits**: This is a rare butterfly, with a slow flight (Larsen, 2005a).

**Early stages**: Nothing published.

**Larval food**: Nothing published.

### \**Syrmoptera bonifacei* Stempffer, 1961

Boniface's False Head

*Syrmoptera bonifacei* Stempffer, 1961. *Annales Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale* (8) **94**: 57 (73 pp.).

*Syrmoptera bonifacei* Stempffer, 1961. d'Abrera, 2009: 698.

**Type locality**: Cameroon: "Cameroun anglais, Mamfé".

**Diagnosis**: The male of *S. bonifacei* is close to the male of *S. mixtura* but the ventral bands in the former are slightly wider, ochre and darkly margined; in *mixtura* they are darker and variable in width (Desloges, 2021). In females the upperside of *bonifacei* is blue and in *mixtura* it is white. In the female of *bonifacei* the hindwing has a black margin; this is absent in *Syrmoptera amasa* (Larsen, 2005a).

**Distribution**: Nigeria (east and Cross River loop), Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea (Bioko), Central African Republic.

**General remarks**: Named after Boniface Watulege, who collected butterflies for T.H.E. Jackson.

**Specific localities:**

Nigeria – Oban Hills (Boniface Watulege); Cross River Loop (Larsen, 2005a); Gashaka-Gumpti

(Larsen, 2005a).

Cameroon – Mamfe (TL); Korup (Larsen, 2005a).

Central African Republic – Yakoli (Desloges, 2021); nr. Bangui (Desloges, 2021)

**Habitat:** Forest.

**Habits:** Generally scarce, especially in comparison to *Oxylides faunus*. The flight is slow for a thecline. In flight the female somewhat resembles an *Oboronia* (Larsen, 2005a).

**Early stages:** Nothing published.

**Larval food:** Nothing published.

### \**Syrmoptera caritas* Libert, 2004

*Syrmoptera caritas* Libert, 2004. *Lambillionea* **104** (3) (Tome II): 443 (433-445).

*Syrmoptera caritas* Libert, 2004. d'Abbrera, 2009: 698.

**Type locality:** Central African Republic: “Bangui”.

**Distribution:** Central African Republic.

**Early stages:** Nothing published.

**Larval food:** Nothing published.

### \**Syrmoptera homeyerii* (Dewitz, 1879)

*Hypolylaena homeyerii* Dewitz, 1879. *Nova Acta Academiae Caesareae Leopoldino-Carolinae Germanicum Naturae Curiosorum* **4** (2): 206 (173-212).

*Syrmoptera homeyeri* Dewitz, 1879. d'Abbrera, 2009: 698. [misspelling of the specific name; should be *homeyerii*].

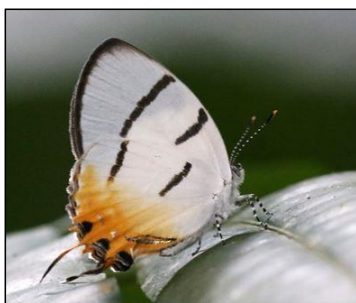
**Type locality:** Angola: “Guinea aus dem 10E S.B., zwischen dem 17-22E O.L. von Greenw.”.

**Distribution:** Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo (south).

**Early stages:** Nothing published.

**Larval food:** Nothing published.

### \**Syrmoptera melanomitra* Karsch, 1895

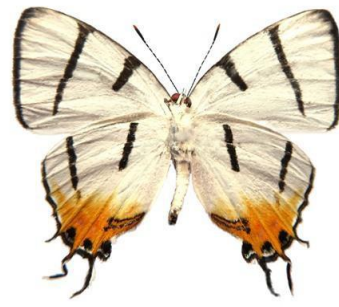


Perching male *Syrmoptera melanomitra*. Cameroon, May 2019.

Image courtesy Jeremy Dobson.

*Syrmoptera melanomitra* Karsch, 1895. *Entomologische Nachrichten. Berlin* **21**: 308 (289-322).

*Syrmoptera melanomitra* Karsch, 1895. d'Abbrera, 2009: 698.



*Syrmoptera melanomitra melanomitra*. Male. Left – upperside; right – underside.  
Ebogo, Cameroon. 28 April 2019. J. Dobson.  
Images M.C. Williams ex Dobson collection.



*Syrmoptera melanomitra melanomitra*. Female. Left – upperside; right – underside.  
Ebogo, Cameroon. 28 April 2019. J. Dobson.  
Images M.C. Williams ex Dobson collection.

**Type locality:** Cameroon: “Yaúnde-Station im Kamerun Hinterlande”.  
**Distribution:** Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo.  
**Early stages:** Nothing published.  
**Larval food:** Nothing published.

### *Syrmoptera melanomitra melanomitra* Karsch, 1895

*Syrmoptera melanomitra* Karsch, 1895. *Entomologische Nachrichten. Berlin* **21**: 308 (289-322).  
*Syrmoptera melanomitra* Karsch, 1895. d’Abreera, 2009: 698.



*Syrmoptera melanomitra melanomitra*. Male. Left – upperside; right – underside.  
Ebogo, Cameroon. 28 April 2019. J. Dobson.



*Syrmoptera melanomitra melanomitra*. Female. Left – upperside; right – underside.  
Ebogo, Cameroon. 28 April 2019. J. Dobson.  
Images M.C. Williams ex Dobson collection.

**Type locality:** Cameroon: “Yaúnde-Station im Kamerun Hinterlande”.

**Distribution:** Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (Cataractes, Kinshasa, Mongala).

**Specific localities:**

Cameroon – Yaounde (TL).

Gabon – Waka (Vande weghe, 2010); Mikongo (Vande weghe, 2010); Ipassa (Vande weghe, 2010); Langoue (Vande weghe, 2010); Kongou (Vande weghe, 2010); camp Nouna (Vande weghe, 2010); Bakouaka (Vande weghe, 2010); Ekouyi (Vande weghe, 2010).

### *Syrmoptera melanomitra nivea* Joicey & Talbot, 1924

*Syrmoptera nivea* Joicey & Talbot, 1924. *Bulletin of the Hill Museum, Witley* 1: 544 (539-564).

*Syrmoptera melanomitra nivea* Joicey & Talbot, 1924. Libert, 2004.

**Type locality:** [Democratic Republic of Congo]: “Belgian Congo: Lubilinga Valley, North-East Lubutu, 2,600 ft.”.

**Distribution:** Democratic Republic of Congo (Mongala, Uele, Tshopo, Tshuapa, Equateur, Sankuru).

**Specific localities:**

Democratic Republic of Congo – Lubilinga Valley, North-East Lubutu (TL); Kasai district (Joicey & Talbot, 1924); Central Forest Block (Ducarme, 2018); Mt Mitumba (Ducarme, 2018).

**Note:** D’Abrera (2009: 698) treats *nivea* as a valid species without making any reference to Libert’s (2004) treatment of the taxon as a subspecies of *Syrmoptera melanomitra* Karsch, 1895.

*androgyna* Joicey & Talbot, 1924 (as female f. of *Syrmoptera nivea*). *Bulletin of the Hill Museum, Witley* 1: 545 (539-564). [Democratic Republic of Congo]: “Belgian Congo, Kasai district”.

### \**Syrmoptera mixtura* (Hulstaert, 1924)

*Oxylides mixtura* Hulstaert, 1924. *Revue de Zoologie et de Botanique Africaine* 12: 174 (112-122, 173-194).

Synonym of *Syrmoptera homeyerii* (Dewitz, 1879). Stempffer, 1961).

Synonym of *Syrmoptera homeyerii* (Dewitz, 1879). Ackery *et al.*, 1995.

Synonym of *Syrmoptera homeyerii* (Dewitz, 1879). D-Abrera, 2009: 698 (without reference to Libert, 2004).

*Syrmoptera mixtura* (Hulstaert, 1924). Libert, 2004.



*Syrmoptera mixtura*. Male. Left – upperside; right – underside.  
Bangu, Ango Terr., Bas-Uele, Democratic Republic of Congo. 1 August 2019. leg. T. Desloges.  
Images courtesy Thomas Desloges.



*Syrmoptera mixtura*. Female. Left – upperside; right – underside.  
Sukadi, Ango Terr., Bas-Uele, Democratic Republic of Congo. 24 July 2019. leg. T. Desloges.  
Images courtesy Thomas Desloges.

**Type locality:** [Democratic Republic of Congo]: Sémio [Zemio], Sassa region. Described from two females. Male first described by Desloges (2021: 28); deposited in ABRI, Nairobi.

**Distribution:** Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Specific localities:**

Democratic Republic of Congo – Sasa Region (TL); Sukadi, Bas-Uele (Desloges, 2021); Bangu, Bas-Uele (Desloges, 2021).

**Early stages:** Nothing published.

**Larval food:** Nothing published.

**Note:** D’Abrera (2009: 698) treats *mixtura* as a synonym of *Syrmoptera homeyerii* without formally changing its status *vis a vis* Libert’s 2004 treatment of *mixtura* as a valid species.