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# Confirmation of the presence of *Geyeria uruguayana* (Burmeister, 1880) in Paraguay, with notes (Lepidoptera: Castniidae)

J. M. González, S. D. Ríos & P. Smith

## Abstract

Two Paraguayan localities expand the known distribution of *Geyeria uruguayana*, and confirm the species presence in the country. Notes on taxonomic history, distribution, biology and ecology of the species are included.

KEY WORDS: Lepidoptera, Castniidae, *Geyeria uruguayana*, distribution, Paraguay.

## Confirmación de la presencia de *Geyeria uruguayana* (Burmeister, 1880) en Paraguay, con notas (Lepidoptera: Castniidae)

## Resumen

Dos localidades de Paraguay amplían la distribución conocida de *Geyeria uruguayana*, permitiendo confirmar la presencia de esta especie en dicho país. Se presentan, además, notas sobre la historia taxonómica, distribución, biología y ecología de la especie.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Lepidoptera, Castniidae, *Geyeria uruguayana*, distribución, Paraguay.

## Introduction

Information about the Castniidae of Paraguay was scarce and scattered until RÍOS & GONZÁLEZ (2011) published a synopsis of the Giant Butterfly-moths known from the country. Twelve species were reported as present in Paraguay, four of which are well known and have been frequently cited in the literature (RÍOS & GONZÁLEZ, 2011; SCHADE, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1930; JÖRGENSEN, 1930). The other eight species listed are known from few specimens. The authors listed four additional species which they considered of probable occurrence in Paraguay.

In this contribution, we confirm the presence in Paraguay of one of these four probable species, *Geyeria uruguayana* (Burmeister, 1880) (RÍOS & GONZÁLEZ, 2011). The confirmation is based on two records: 1) a specimen collected in Laguna Blanca Natural Reserve, San Pedro Department, which is deposited in the Para La Tierra Zoological Collection; and 2) an uncollected (but photographed) specimen from Teniente Enciso National Park, Boquerón Department, in the Paraguayan Chaco.

*Geyeria uruguayana* is poorly represented in collections. Specimen records exist from Argentina, Uruguay, and Southeastern Brazil (MILLER, 1986; PENCO, 2011; PREISS 1899; RÍOS & GÓNZALEZ, 2011), but few specimens are available from each collecting locality. The new records reported here expand the geographical distribution of the species to Paraguay. Further details on the species, collecting sites, and collections where they are to be found are presented herein.

## Taxonomic history

*Geyeria uruguayana* (Burmeister, 1880)

*Castnia uruguayana* Burmeister, 1880

*Castnia uruguayana* f. *separatula* Strand, 1913

*Castnia uruguayana cinerascens* Houlbert, 1917

*Castnia uruguayana* f. *badariottii* Raymundo, 1919

*Castnia uruguayana ochreifascia* Joicey & Talbot, 1925

*Castnia uruguayana champaquiensis* Breyer, 1929

*Castnia uruguayana rubra* Raymundo, 1931

*Castnia uruguayana strandi* Raymundo, 1931, nom. nud.

*Geyeria uruguayana* var. *badariotti* Miller, 1995, missp.

*Geyeria uruguayana ochrefascia* Miller, 1995, missp.

The species was originally described as *Castnia uruguayana* by BURMEISTER (1880) from material collected in Paysandú, “Banda Oriental”, Uruguay. STRAND (1913) maintained all Neotropical Castniidae in the genus *Castnia* s.l. and named form *separatula* based on a slightly atypical *C. uruguayana* male of unknown origin. HOULBERT (1917) describes the ssp. *cinerascens* from material collected in the Eastern Bank of the Uruguay River (Banda Oriental, Uruguay). HOULBERT (1918) included the species *decussata* Godart, *strigata* Walker, *hubneri* Gray and *uruguayana* within his new genus *Ypanema*. This genus was later synonymized with *Geyeria* which was originally proposed by Heinrich Buchecker to include the species *decussata*, *discoidalis* Buchecker (= *G. decussata*) and *castnioides* Buchecker (= *G. hubneri*) (BUCHECKER, [1880]; FLETCHER & NYE, 1982; OITICICA, 1955). RAYMUNDO (1919) described the form *badariottii* based on material collected in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Later, after studying a female collected in Mato Grosso, Brazil, the subspecies *ochreifascia* was also described (JOICEY & TALBOT, 1925). BREYER (1929) citing “notable differences” with “typical” specimens of *G. uruguayana* from Uruguay, put forth the ssp. *champaquiensis* based on material collected in Córdoba, Argentina. MILLER (1986, 1995) recognized three subspecies (*uruguayana*, *champaquiensis* and *ochrefascia*[sic]) in *Geyeria uruguayana*. However, they were all later synonymized under *uruguayana* by LAMAS (1995).

## Material examined

Data presented as written in the labels of each specimen examined. Additional information is included within square brackets. ARGENTINA: 1 ♂, *Cast.[nia]* *uruguayana* Burm, 20 Argentina, Joicey Bequest. Brit.[ish] Mus.[eum] 1934-120 (BMNH); 2 ♂♂, 1 ♀, Goya, [Argentina], Coll. ? (BMNH); 1 ♂, Argentina, Córdoba, R. Foerster leg. (CMZ); 1 ♀, Typus, *Castnia uruguayana champaquiensis*, Yacanto, Córdoba, Argentina, Cerro Champaquí, Sierras de Córdoba, 2400 m. I-1929, Coll. A. Breyer (MLP) [this specimen is the one illustrated by BREYER (1929)]; 1 ♀, Formosa, Gran Guardia, [Argentina], 11-III-1953, Col. J. Foerster (MLP); 1 ♂, Formosa, Gran Guardia, [Argentina], Col. ?? (MLP); BRAZIL: 1 ♀, Holotype, *C.[astnia]* *uruguayana ochreifascia* J. & T., Matto Grosso, Brazil, Ex-Coll. Herbert Druce, Joicey Bequest. Brit.[ish] Mus.[eum] 1934-120 (BMNH); 1 ♀, Neotipo, *Castnia uruguayana* Burm. f. *badariottii* Benedito Raymundo, Juiz de Fora, M[inas] G[erais], [Brazil], Coll. B. Raymundo, leg. (MNRJ) [this specimen is illustrated in MIELKE & CASAGRANDE (1986); it was designated Neotype because the specimen originally described by RAYMUNDO (1919; 1930) was not found]; 1 ♂, [São José de] Bôa Vista - Tibagi PR[Paraná], Brazil, 1000 m., 12-V-2005 (RVC); 8 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀, [São José de] Bôa Vista - Tibagi, 1000 - 1100 m, Paraná, Brazil, XII-1971, Coll. ? (NC); 1 ♂, “30 km L Tibagi - 1050 m”, Paraná, Brazil, 14-XII-2008. Coll. O. & C. Mielke (DZUP); PARAGUAY: 1 ♂, Reserva Natural Laguna Blanca, Departamento de San Pedro, Paraguay, 31-X-2010, Coll. K. Atkinson (CZPLT-E) [this specimen constitutes the first record of the species for Paraguay]; URUGUAY: 2 ♂♂, Paysandú, [Uruguay],

Uruguayana, reçu de M. J. Petit, en Xbre, [October?], 1919 (BMNH); 1 ♂, *Castnia uruguayana* Burmeister, *Cast.[nia] uruguayana* var. *cinerascens* Houlb., Rep. Argentina, Banda Oriental, [Uruguay] ["Banda Oriental of Argentine" was the name of the region that corresponds with what we know today as Uruguay], coll. E. Kinkelin, ex-Collection Ch. Oberthür (type of *Castnia uruguayana* var. *cinerascens* Houlbert, 1918) (BMNH) [this specimen is illustrated in HOULBERT (1918)]; 2 ♂♂, Uruguay, Paysandú, I-1930, Col. ?? (MLP); 1 ♀, 111. Uruguay, Rschiv.[?] (BMNH); 1 ♂, Uruguay, 549, Strecker Colln. 25664, genitalia vial no. M-3788, Jacqueline Miller (FMNH); 1 ♂, Uruguay, 985, Strecker Colln. 25665 (FMNH); 1 ♂, *Castnia uruguaiana*[sic] Bium.[sic], Col. F. Bourquin, Rep. Argentina, Paysandú, [Uruguay]. Slide N° M-7135, ♂ append. Jacqueline Y. Miller (MGCL); 1 ♀, *Castnia uruguayana* Burm., Col. F. Bourquin, Rep. Argentina, Paysandú, [Uruguay], I-30 (MGCL) [These last two specimens have an original Fernando Bourquin label which has "Rep. Argentina" typed below the collector's name, however the specimens were actually collected in Paysandú, Uruguay which is handwritten by F. Bourquin]; 2 ♂♂, Uruguay, Paysandú, Col. Breyer (MLP); 1 ♂, Uruguay, Paysandú, Col. F. Bourquin (MLP).

Codens of Museums or collections where *G. uruguayana* were found, studied and mentioned here are as follows: BMNH, Natural History Museum, London, U.K.; CMZ, Mateo Zelig Collection, Entre Ríos, Argentina; CZPLT-E, Colección Zoológica de Para La Tierra - Entomology, Laguna Blanca, Paraguay; DZUP, Departamento de Zoología, Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil; FMNH, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois, USA; MGCL, McGuire Center for Lepidoptera & Biodiversity, Gainesville, Florida, USA; MLP, Museo de La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina; MNRJ, Museu Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; RVC, Roberto Vinciguerra Collection, Palermo, Italy. NC corresponds to a private collection that we are unable to disclose.

## Biology and behavior

It has been previously stated that the flight pattern of this species is "slow and hovering" which is atypical of most Castniidae specimens have also been observed in grassy spots posing with their wings closed (MILLER, 1986, RÍOS & GONZÁLEZ, 2011). Individuals have been observed flying during mid-day, but can also fly at different times of the day if disturbed (MILLER, 1986). BIEZANKO *et al.* (1957) state that the larvae feed on *Eryngium paniculatum* Cav. & Dombey ex F. Delaroché (Apiaceae). PENCO (2011) and PASTRANA (2004), corroborate this host, adding that Palms (Arecaceae) are another likely hosts of this borer.

## Paraguayan records and distribution

The first record from Paraguay is a specimen (Fig. 1) collected on October 31, 2010, in Laguna Blanca Natural Reserve (S 23° 48' 45", W 56° 17' 41"), San Pedro Department, during the ongoing Lepidoptera inventory at the Para La Tierra Ecological Station (PLT). The vegetation here consists of a mosaic of cerrado and degraded patches of Atlantic forest interspersed with semi-deciduous transitional humid-dry gallery forest. (GUYRA PARAGUAY, 2008). The four cerrado "ecotopes" described by EITEN (1972, 1978) are all present within the reserve. Unfortunately, the specimen lacks any ecological notes associated with it.

A second *Geyeria uruguayana* specimen was observed by one of the authors (PS) in Teniente Enciso National Park (S 21° 12' 40", W 61° 39' 21"), Boquerón Department on February 9, 2012. Due to permit restrictions the specimen was photographed but not collected (Fig. 2). The vegetation at this locality consists of low, Dry Chaco thorn forest with a canopy no more than 2.5m high, broken by occasional much larger trees [e.g. quebracho: *Aspidosperma* (Apocynaceae) and *Schinopsis* (Anacardiaceae)] and with a bromeliad (Bromeliaceae) and cacti (Cactaceae) undergrowth. The moth was located on a path through the forest that was lined at either side by a low-growing, moss-like fern. Its flight behavior was notable, with short, erratic flights recalling a

hesperiid that revealed eye-catching glimpses of the orange hindwing and the insect frequently doubled back to retrace the same route. The moth perched on the ground for fairly long periods between flights, with wings folded over the body, but it was not observed feeding (Fig. 2).

Despite the wide geographical distribution of *Geyeria uruguayana*, precise locality data are limited. Existing specimens do however reveal its presence in a wide diversity of mainly open habitats in southeastern South America (Fig 3). The most northerly record is from an unknown location in the Matto Grosso region, while the easternmost is located around an unspecified site in Minas Gerais, both in Brazil. The Type specimen was collected in Paysandú, close to the most southerly record from Argentina. The two additional localities reported here from Paraguay confirm that the species is more widely distributed than previously thought, and the distance between these two localities is suggestive of a much wider distribution within the country. Furthermore, since the Teniente Enciso record is geographically close to the Bolivian border, and with a similar habitat to that region it seems probable that the species also occurs in Bolivia.

As Paraguay has suffered some of the heaviest environmental intervention in the region and Castniidae are known to be particularly sensitive to habitat destruction (GONZÁLEZ, 2004; LAMAS, 1993; RÍOS & GONZÁLEZ, 2011; VINCIGUERRA et al., 2011), detailed collecting studies are needed in order to clearly establish the real distribution and status of the species. Until these data are available, an effective conservation program cannot be proposed.

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