






Two new species of *Culicoides* Latreille (Diptera: Ceratopogonidae) from the Gangetic Plains of West Bengal, India with a key to the Indian species

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ABSTRACT

Two species, *Culicoides obtusus* **sp. nov.** of the subgenus *Monoculicoides* Khalaf and *C. cornus* **sp. nov.** of the Shermani group Wirth & Hubert are discovered from Kushmundi, Dakshin Dinajpur, Narayanpur, Birbhum, and Burdwan Town, Purba Bardhaman respectively of the Gangetic Plains of West Bengal, India with illustrations and microphotographs. The pupal stages of *C. cornus* **sp. nov.** were reared to adults of both sexes in the laboratory condition while members of both sexes of *C. obtusus* **sp. nov.** were collected using light trap as well as one pupa reared to get one adult female under the laboratory conditions. Identification of taxa is made following relevant literature and specimens are present housed in the Entomology Division, Department of Zoology, University of Burdwan. Information on the bionomics of the species, an inventory of Indian species of *Culicoides* and a key to the 73 Indian species of the genus are provided.

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Introduction

Biting midges of the genus *Culicoides* (Latreille 1809) are one of the most diverse and smallest haematophagous flies of the family Ceratopogonidae. Currently around 1368 extant species are recognised in the world (Borkent 2016) including approximately 71 species reported from India (Borkent 2016; Harrup et al. 2016; Saha et al. 2017). Khalaf (1954) established the subgenus *Monoculicoides*, which is comprised of 23 species that occur worldwide, of which five occur in the Oriental realm and only two, *Culicoides homotomus* Kieffer, 1922 and *C. rarus* Das Gupta, 1963 are from India (Borkent 2016; Saha et al. 2017). Wirth and Hubert (1989) described the Shermani group, which contains 22 species that occur throughout the world, of which 17 occur in the Oriental realm and 3 are Indian species (Borkent 2016; Harrup et al. 2016; Saha et al. 2017). Saha et al.