Genus *Acleros* Mabille, 1886


Type-species: *Cyclopides leucopyga* Mabille, by monotypy.

An Afrotropical genus comprising eight species.

*Acleros bibundica* Strand, 1913


**Type locality:** Cameroon: “Kamerun, Bibundi”.
**Distribution:** Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo.
**Specific localities:**
*Cameroon – Bibundi (TL).*
*Democratic Republic of Congo – Moera (Rebel, 1914); Ukaika (Rebel, 1914).*
**Early stages:** Nothing published.
**Larval food:** Nothing published.


*Acleros bobiri* Collins & Larsen, 2008


*Type locality:* Ghana: “Hohoe, Volta Region (06°60'N 00°46'E), (T. Maessen leg., coll. McGuire Center, Gainsville)”. Holotype illustrated as *Acleros bala* Berger, ms. in Larsen (2005a).
**Etymology:** Named after the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary in Ghana (Collins & Larsen, 2008).
**Distribution:** Ghana.
**Specific localities:**
*Ghana – Hohoe (TL); Kakum National Park (Collins & Larsen, 2008); Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary (Collins & Larsen, 2008); Suhien (Collins & Larsen, 2008), Amedzofe (Collins & Larsen, 2008; male illustrated above).*
**Habitat:** Nothing published.
**Habits:** Nothing published.
Early stages: Nothing published.
Larval food: Nothing published.

*bala* Berger (as sp. of *Acleros*). Manuscript name. Type locality: Ghana, Volta Region.

**Acleros leucopyga** (Mabille, 1877)


Type locality: Madagascar.
Distribution: Madagascar (south and south-west).
Habitat: Forest (Lees *et al*., 2003).
Early stages: Nothing published.
Larval food: Nothing published.

**Acleros mackenii** (Trimen, 1868)


*Acleros mackenii mackenii*. Male (Wingspan 30 mm). Left – upperside; right – underside.
Kwamhalanga, Mpumalanga, South Africa. 6 March 2011. J. Dobson.
Images M.C. Williams ex Dobson Collection.

**Alternative common name:** Macken’s Dart; Macken’s Dusky Skipper; Skadu-dartelaartjie (Afrikaans).

**Type locality:** [South Africa]: “D’Urban”. Holotype (male) in the Natural History Museum, London.

**Distribution:** Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland.

**Habitat:** Forest and coastal bush. Mostly found in very wet areas or in dense undergrowth on the banks of streams (Pringle *et al*., 1994). It can survive in fairly markedly degraded forest (Larsen, 2005a). In Tanzania at altitudes from near sea-level to 2 000 m (subspecies *instabilis*) (Kielland, 1990d).

**Habits:** Usually not common but, at times, it may be numerous (Larsen, 2005a). Mostly frequents forest edges and clearings where it flies low down, settling on the leaves of plants in the undergrowth. It also often settles on long grass blades in forest glades (Pringle *et al*., 1994). It flies relatively slowly and is not very active. Both sexes feed from flowers in the undergrowth. Males are also known to imbibe fluids from bird droppings (Larsen, 1991c). Males establish territories on the edge of forests or in clearings in forest.

**Flight period:** All year.

**Early stages:**

Clark, *in* Dickson & Kroon, 1978: 258; plate 27 [as Acleros mackenii; Durban, KwaZulu-Natal].

“**Egg:** Laid singly on underside of a leaf; 0.95 mm diameter by 0.65 mm high, with 19 to 24 longitudinal ribs braced by some 27 very fine staggered ribs, which break up into an extremely fine hexagonal pattern near the top of the egg. Colour brownish-red, then pale brown with a touch of purple or red, but darkening with age, above, as a result of the dark head of the larva showing through. Eggs hatch after 9 to 11 days. The shell is not eaten after emergence, but the larva bites away much of the upper surface of the egg before it emerges. **Larva:** 1<sup>st</sup> instar 2 growing to 4 mm in 8 days; 2<sup>nd</sup> instar 4 growing to 7 mm in 8 days; 3<sup>rd</sup> instar 7 growing to 11.5 mm in 8 days; 4<sup>th</sup> instar 11.5 growing to 18 mm in 13 days. Instars may be of shorter or longer duration than is recorded above. In the final instar the ventral portion of segments 10 and 11 are pure white. There is a variation in the intensity of colour, notably in the final instar. Larvae construct a cache by joining a leaf or leaves together, but young larvae partly bite away and turn down a portion of a leaf, attaching it to the under-side of the same leaf (as observed in the field, in the case of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> instar larvae). They crawl out at intervals to feed on the edge of a leaf. Moulting and pupation take place within a cache. **Pupa:** 13 mm. The pupa resembles a crumpled leaf, and is difficult to detect. It is secured to a silken pad, by its cremastral hooks, within the leaf-shelter. Emergence occurs after 21 or 22 days. The species is multi-brooded. Recorded from eggs and larvae from Durban.”

Cock & Congdon, 2013: 28 [ovum, larva & pupa; subspecies *instabilis*].
Final instar larva and pupa of *Acleros mackenii mackenii*.
Images courtesy Allison Sharp.

**Larval food:**

*Acridocarpus longifolius* (G.Don) Hook.f. (Malpighiaceae) [Van Someren, 1974: 325; requires confirmation according to Cock & Congdon, 2013].

*Acridocarpus smeathmanni* (DC.) Guill. & Perr. (Malpighiaceae) [Henning, Henning, Joannou & Woodhall, 1997: 162; requires confirmation according to Cock & Congdon, 2013].

*Bridelia micrantha* (Hoschst.) Baill. (Euphorbiaceae) [Heath *et al*., 2002: 14; requires confirmation according to Cock & Congdon, 2013].

*Combretum molle* R.Br. ex G. Don (Combretaceae) [Heath *et al*., 2002: 14; requires confirmation according to Cock & Congdon, 2013].

*Quisqualis* species (Combretaceae) [Heath *et al*., 2002: 14; requires confirmation according to Cock & Congdon, 2013].

*Rhus coriaria* L. (Anacardiaceae) [Van Someren, 1974: 325; requires confirmation according to Cock & Congdon, 2013].

*Terminalia* species (Combretaceae) [Heath *et al*., 2002: 14; requires confirmation according to Cock & Congdon, 2013].

*Vigna* sp. (Fabaceae) [Larsen, 1991; Kenya].

*Vigna schimperi* Baker (Fabaceae). [Cock & Congdon, 2013; Ngong Forest, Kenya].

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*Acleros mackenii mackenii* (Trimen, 1868)


Ancyloxypha mackenii (Trimen, 1868). Trimmen & Bowker, 1889.

*Combretum molle* R.Br. ex G. Don (Combretaceae). Swanepoel, 1953a.


*Acleros mackenii mackenii*. Male (Wingspan 30 mm). Left – upperside; right – underside.

Kwamhalanga, Mpumalanga, South Africa. 6 March 2011. J. Dobson.
Images M.C. Williams ex Dobson Collection.

**Type locality:** [South Africa]: “D’Urbans”. Holotype (male) in the Natural History Museum, London.

**Distribution:** Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa (Limpopo Province, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape Province), Swaziland.

In South Africa its distribution covers 84 quarter degree squares (614 records) [see http://vmus.adu.org.za]. It is regarded as widespread.

**Specific localities:**
- Malawi – Zomba Mountain (Congdon et al., 2010).
- Zambia – Ikelenge (Heath et al., 2002); Mwinilunga (Heath et al., 2002); Solwezi (Heath et al., 2002); Mufulira (Heath et al., 2002); Kalulushi (Heath et al., 2002); Mpangwe (Heath et al., 2002); Luangwa Valley (Heath et al., 2002); Nyika (Heath et al., 2002).
- Mozambique – Mount Namuli (Congdon et al., 2010); Mount Mabu (Congdon et al., 2010); Mt Mecula [-12.0772 37.6297] (Congdon & Bayliss, 2013).
- Zimbabwe – Victoria Falls (Pringle et al., 1994).
- Limpopo Province – Lekgalameetse Nature Reserve (“Malta Forest”) (Swanepoel, 1953); Woodbush (Swanepoel, 1953); Houtbosdorp (Swanepoel, 1953); Louis Trichardt (Swanepoel, 1953); Entabeni Forest (Swanepoel, 1953); Sibasa (Swanepoel, 1953).
- Mpumalanga – Barberton (Swanepoel, 1953); Sabie (Swanepoel, 1953); Graskop (Swanepoel, 1953); Buffelspoort Nature Reserve (Williams).
- KwaZulu-Natal – Durban (TL); Oribi Gorge (Swanepoel, 1953); Umkomaas (Swanepoel, 1953); Isipingo (Swanepoel, 1953); Eshowe (Swanepoel, 1953); Pietermaritzburg (Swanepoel, 1953); Karkloof (Swanepoel, 1953); Kosi Bay Nature Reserve (Pringle & Kyle, 2002); Tembe Nature Reserve (Pringle & Kyle, 2002); Iphithi Nature Reserve (S. Woodhall, unpublished, 2009); Peace Cottage (female illustrated above).
- Eastern Cape Province – Port St Johns (Swanepoel, 1953); Cintsa East (male illustrated above).
- Swaziland – Malolotja N. R. (www.sntc.org.sz).

**nyassicola** Strand, 1921 (as sp. of Acleros). Archiv für Naturgeschichte 86 (A.7.): 153 (113-171). “Nyassa, Britisch Ost-Afrika”.


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**Acleros mackenii olaus (Plötz, 1884)**

**Type locality:** [Democratic Republic of Congo]: “Loango”.

**Distribution:** Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic Congo, Sudan (south), Rwanda, Burundi.

**Specific localities:**
Ghana – Wli Falls (Larsen, 2005a); Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary (Larsen et al., 2007); Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary (Larsen et al., 2009).
Cameroon – Korup (Larsen, 2005a).
Democratic Republic of Congo – Loango (TL).

**Acleros mackenii instabilis** Mabille, 1889


*Type locality*: [Tanzania]: “Zanguebar”.

**Distribution**: Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania.

**Specific localities**:
- Tanzania – Zanzibar (TL); Widespread (Kielland, 1990d); Katavi National Park (Fitzherbert et al., 2006).

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**Acleros neavei** Evans, 1937

*Acleros neavei* Evans, 1937. *A catalogue of the African Hesperiidae indicating the classification and nomenclature adopted in the British Museum*: 117 (212 pp.).

**Type locality**: Uganda: “Ngusi River, Unyoro, 3,000 ft”.

**Distribution**: Democratic Republic of Congo (east – Ituri district), Uganda, Tanzania (eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika).

**Specific localities**:
- Uganda – Ngusi River, Unyoro (TL); Semuliki N.P. (Davenport & Howard, 1996).
- Tanzania – Kigoma District (Kielland, 1990d).

**Habitat**: Forest. In Tanzania from 800 to 1 400 m (Kielland, 1990d).

**Habits**: Flight rather slow and low down, just above the vegetation (Kielland, 1990d). Frequently settles on leaves or on flowers (Kielland, 1990d).

**Early stages**: Nothing published.

**Larval food**: Nothing published.

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**Acleros nigrapex** Strand, 1913

*Powdered Dusky Skipper*


Type locality: Cameroon: “Alen”.


Specific localities:
Ghana – Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary (Larsen et al., 2007); Amedzofe (male and female illustrated above).
Cameroon – Alen (TL); Korup (Larsen, 2005a).
Gabon – Camp PPG, Bateke Plateau National Park (van de Weghe, 2010).
Democratic Republic of Congo – Mawambi (Rebel, 1914).
Tanzania – Minzoro Forest (uncommon to rare) (Congdon & Collins, 1998).

Habitat: Forest.

Habits: Not a common species of skipper (Larsen, 2005a). Usually found flying, near the ground, along forest paths and in forest clearings. Often noted feeding from small flowers. It appears to favour more shady places than do Acleros mackenii and Acleros ploetzi (Congdon & Collins, 1998). The flight is also weaker than that of Acleros mackenii (Larsen, 2005a).

Early stages: Nothing published.

Larval food: Nothing published.

*pulverana* Strand, 1913 (as sp. of *Acleros*). Archiv für Naturgeschichte 78 (A.12.): 47 (30-84). Cameroon: “Alen”.


*Acleros ploetzi* Mabille, 1889

Ploetz’s Dart


**Alternative common names:** Ploetz’s Dusky Skipper; Ploetz’s Skipper.

**Type locality:** Ghana: “Aburi”.

**Diagnosis:** Differs from *Acleros mackenii* on the forewing underside, which is broadly white along the inner margin (Pringle et al., 1994).

**Distribution:** Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan (south), Uganda, Kenya (west and coast), Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe (east).

**Specific localities:**
- **Senegal** – Dakar (Larsen, 2005a); Cap Vert (Larsen, 2005a).
- **Ghana** – Aburi (TL); Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary (Larsen et al., 2007); Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary (Larsen et al., 2009).
- **Cameroon** – Victoria (Plötz, 1879).
- **Gabon** – M'bour (van de Weghe, 2010); Waka National Park (van de Weghe, 2010).
- **Kenya** – western forests (Larsen, 1991c); Shimba Hills (Larsen, 1991c).
- **Tanzania** – Widespread in forests (Kielland, 1990d).
- **Malawi** – Mount Mulanje (Congdon et al., 2010).
- **Zambia** – Ikeleme (Heath et al., 2002).
- **Mozambique** – Dondo (Pringle et al., 1994); Xiluvo (Pennington and Cookson); Amatongas Forest (Pringle et al., 1994); Musapa River Forest (Pringle et al., 1994); Salone Forest (Pinhey).
- **Zimbabwe** – Bomponi, below the Vumba Mountains (Pringle et al., 1994; male illustrated above).

**Habitat:** Forest, including secondary growth (Larsen, 2005a). In Tanzania at altitudes from 300 to 1 600 m (Kielland, 1990d).

**Habits:** Similar to those of *Acleros mackenii* (Pringle et al., 1994). It is an unobtrusive little skipper that spends much of the time resting on green leaves but may be seen also at flowers (Larsen, 2005a), such as those of *Justicia flava* (Cock & Congdon, 2013).

**Flight period:** July-August and, again from February to May (Pringle et al., 1994).

**Early stages:**

Sevastopulo, *vide* Cock & Congdon 2013: 31 [larva and pupa]

**Larval food:**
- Fabaceae [Larsen, 1991c: 421].
- *Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp. (Fabaceae) (cowpea) [Vuattoux, 1999; Ivory Coast].

*leucopygus* Plötz, 1879 (as sp. of *Apaustus*). *Stettiner Entomologische Zeitung* 40: 360 (353-364).

Ghana: “Aburi”; Cameroon?: “bei Victoria”. [Invalid; junior secondary homonym of *Acleros leucopyga* (Mabille), 1877 [Hesperiidae].]
*Acleros sparsum* Druce, 1909


**Type locality:** Cameroon: “Bitje, Ja River, Cameroons, 2000 feet”.

**Distribution:** Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (east – Ituri Forest).

**Specific localities:**
- Cameroon – Bitje, Ja River (TL).

**Early stages:** Nothing published.

**Larval food:** Nothing published.