

Genus *Prosopalpus* Holland, 1896 Dwarf Skippers

Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London **1896**: 53 (2-107).

Type-species: *Cobalus duplex* Mabille, 1890 [synonym of *Apaustus debilis* Plötz], by original designation.

The genus *Prosopalpus* belongs to the Family Hesperidae Latreille, 1809; Subfamily Hesperinae Latreille, 1809; Tribe Aeromachini Tutt, 1906. The other Afrotropical genera in the Tribe Aeromachini are *Lepella* and *Ampittia*.

Prosopalpus (**Dwarf Skippers**) is an Afrotropical genus of three species. They are placed in the tribe Aeromachini (Zhang, *et al.*, 2022: 35). The Dwarf Skippers are tiny brown hesperiids, which are all scarce and local. The larval host plants are Poaceae (Congdon & Collins, 1998; Cock & Congdon, 2014).

**Prosopalpus debilis* (Plötz, 1879) Western Dwarf Skipper

Apaustus debilis Plötz, 1879. *Stettiner Entomologische Zeitung* **40**: 360 (353-364).



Prosopalpus debilis. Male. Left – upperside; right – underside.
Kikuyu, Bukoba, Tanzania. December 1992. J. Kielland. ABRI-2019-2345.
Images M.C. Williams ex ABRI Collection.



Prosopalpus debilis. Female. Left – upperside; right – underside.
Campu, southern Cameroon. December 1993. SCC. ABRI-2019-2346.
Images M.C. Williams ex ABRI Collection.

Type locality: Cameroon: “Mungo”.

Diagnosis: Differs from *Prosopalpus saga* in that it is not as dark and lacks a hindwing brand. Differs from *Prosopalpus styła* in that on the hindwing underside the pale discal band consists of two rows of spots (in *styła* the band is solid) (Congdon & Collins, 1998).

Distribution: Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria (west), Cameroon, Gabon, Ethiopia, Tanzania (north-west), Zambia (north).

Specific localities:

Senegal – Basse Casamance (Larsen, 2005a; single record).

Sierra Leone – Freetown (Mabille, 1890).

Ghana – Ankasa (Larsen, 2005a).

Nigeria – Benin (Larsen, 2005a).

Cameroon – Mungo (TL).

Gabon – Mpassa, Bateke Plateau (Vande weghe, 2010).

Ethiopia – Ghibe-Tolley (male illustrated above).

Tanzania – Kikuru Forest (relatively common but localized) (Congdon & Collins, 1998); Kere Hill, in Minziro Forest (very rare) (Congdon & Collins, 1998).

Zambia – Mwinilunga (Heath *et al.*, 2002); Solwezi (Heath *et al.*, 2002); Mpika (Heath *et al.*, 2002); Ikelenge (female illustrated above).

Habitat: Forest of various types (Larsen, 2005a).

Early stages: Nothing published.

Larval food: Nothing published.

duplex Mabille, 1890 (as sp. of *Cobalus*). *Bulletin de la Société Entomologique de France* (6) 9: 169 (149-150, 155-156, 167-169, 183-184). Sierra Leone: “Free-Town”.

****Prosopalpus saga* Evans, 1937**
Branded Dwarf Skipper

Prosopalpus saga Evans, 1937. *A catalogue of the African Hesperidae indicating the classification and nomenclature adopted in the British Museum*: 81 (212 pp.).



Prosopalpus saga. Male. Left – upperside; right – underside.
Mole, northern Ghana. October 2012. ABRI Leg. ABRI-2019-2347.
Images M.C. Williams ex ABRI Collection.



Prosopalpus saga. Female. Left – upperside; right – underside.
Yeale, Ivory Coast. September 1999. P. Moretta. ABRI-2019-2348.
Images M.C. Williams ex ABRI Collection.

Type locality: Uganda: “W. Angole”.

Diagnosis: Differs from *Prosopalpus styla* in the following respects: upperside almost black; underside dark and almost unmarked; cilia dark brown (in *styla* pale and chequered); hindwing upperside of male with a black brand (Congdon & Collins, 1998).

Distribution: Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda (west), Kenya? (west), Tanzania (north-west).

Specific localities:

Guinea – Macenta (Larsen, 2005a).

Ivory Coast – Yapo (H. Warren-Gash, *vide* Larsen, 2005a).

Ghana – Takoradi (Maessen, *vide* Larsen, 2005a); Ankasa (Larsen, 2005a); Bia National Park (Larsen, 2005a).

Uganda – W. Ankole (TL); Mpanga Forest (Safian & Pyrcz, 2020)..

Kenya – Chepalunga (van Someren, *vide* Larsen, 1991c; record requires confirmation).

Tanzania – Kere Hill, in Minziro Forest (Congdon & Collins, 1998); Kikuru Forest (rare in both) (Congdon & Collins, 1998).

Habitat: Forest.

Habits: This is a scarce skipper (Larsen, 2005a). Specimens are most likely to be seen on the edges of forest and along forest paths. Here they fly about among low vegetation in open places (Congdon & Collins, 1998). The flight is weak (Larsen, 2005a). Berger (1962) found a specimen feeding from lantana flowers.

Early stages: Nothing published.

Larval food: Nothing published.

****Prosopalpus styla* Evans, 1937**
Widespread Dwarf Skipper

Prosopalpus styla Evans, 1937. *A catalogue of the African Hesperiidae indicating the classification and nomenclature adopted in the British Museum*: 81 (212 pp.).



Prosopalpus styla. Male. Left – upperside; right – underside.
Kakamega, Kenya. October 1990. SCC. ABRI-2019-2343.
Images M.C. Williams ex ABRI Collection.



Prosopalpus styla. Female. Left – upperside; right – underside.
Kakamega, Kenya. October 2001. SCC. ABRI-2019-2344.
Images M.C. Williams ex ABRI Collection.

Type locality: Sudan: “S. Sudan”.

Distribution: Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Benin (south, central), Nigeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan (south), Uganda, Kenya (west), Tanzania (north-west), Zambia (north-west).

Specific localities:

Senegal – Cap Vert (Larsen, 2005a); Niokolo-Koba (Larsen, 2005a); Basse Casamance (Larsen, 2005a).

Gambia – Abuko, Brufut, Marakissa, Walikunda, Niani, Basse (Jon Baker, pers. comm, May 2020).

Burkina Faso – Bala (Larsen, 2005a).

Liberia – Wologizi (Safian *et al.*, 2020).

Ghana – Mole National Park (Larsen, 2005a); Wli Falls (Larsen, 2005a); Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary (Larsen *et al.*, 2007).

Benin – Houeyogbe Forest (Coache & Rainon, 2016); see Coache *et al.*, 2017.

Nigeria – Jos Plateau (Larsen, 2005a).

Democratic Republic of Congo – Ituri Forest (Ducarme, 2018); Semuliki Valley (Ducarme, 2018).

Uganda – Mpanga Forest (Safian & Pycz, 2020).

Kenya – Suna (Larsen, 1991c); Webuye (Larsen, 1991c); Kakamega Forest (Larsen, 1991c).

Tanzania – Minziro Forest, Bukoba Region (Kielland, 1990d).

Zambia – Chinyaji River (Ikelenge) (Heath *et al.*, 2002); Mwinilunga (Heath *et al.*, 2002); Zambezi Rapids, Ikelenge (Heath; male specimen illustrated above).

Habitat: Marshy open ground in savanna and forest (Larsen, 2005a). Areas where grass is growing in standing water (Cock & Congdon, 2014). In Tanzania at about 1 200 m (Kielland, 1990d).

Habits: Rests in vegetation in deep shade or low down among tall reeds (Gillies, 1985). This is an unobtrusive skipper with a weak flight that is found in very localized colonies (Larsen, 1991c). They fly close to the ground, feeding from minute flowers at ground-level (Larsen, 1991c). Males are known to mud-puddle (Larsen, 2005a).

Early stages:

Cock & Congdon, 2014 [putative final instar].

Cock *et al.*, 2017 [ovum].

Larval food:

Grass (Poaceae) [Congdon & Collins, 1998: 16; Tanzania; oviposition only].

Leersia hexandra (Poaceae) [Cock & Congdon, 2014; Ibadan, Nigeria; requires confirmation according to the authors].