

TROTORHOMBIA METACHROMATA: A TROPICAL CRENULATE MOTH NEW TO FLORIDA AND TEXAS (LEPIDOPTERA: EPIPLEMIDAE)

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The gray crenulate moth, *Trotorhombia metachromata* (Walker), larger (ca. 20-28mm wingspan) than most species of the family, was described from the Dominican Republic. The known distribution has included the West Indies and parts of Central America, south to Brazil. The species is here reported for the first time from Florida and Texas. It has been in the genus *Nedusia*, where the synonym *excavata* Möschler (1890) (described from Puerto Rico) was placed, but it seems true *Nedusia* differ from *Trotorhombia*. The single species, *T. metachromata*, was placed in the genus *Trotorhombia* when Warren (1904) described it. The other known synonym is *Erosia bisinuata* Felder & Rogenhofer, described from French Guiana (Dalla Torre, 1924). Gaede (1930) illustrated the species in color in the Seitz series. This is the only larger North American epiplemid with males having large bipectinate antennae (other than one other tropical species also found in Texas).

In Texas, it now has been found in Hidalgo Co., at Estero Llano Grande State Park, near Weslaco by the Mexican border. The single male specimen was taken on 20 Sep 2007 by C. Bordelon. It was found flying at about noon in a half-shaded area and would fly about between the shade and full sunlight, much as some of the small riordinid butterflies do. When flying in sunlight, the upper wing surfaces have a light-blue iridescence, which alternates with the silvery-gray of the undersides.

In Florida, the species was already found many years ago, from 1965-68, but specimens were unidentified and unreported before coming to the FSCA among the donated collection of the late John M. Plomley, a Canadian collector retired for many years in Hollywood, Florida (Heppner, 1995). Three specimens he collected came from Hollywood, Broward Co. (24 Jul 1965 ♂♀, 17 Aug 1966 ♂) and one from Miami, Dade Co. (16 May 1968 ♀). Following the Texas find, the Florida specimens were studied further to determine their identity as well. One additional female specimen was taken in Broward Co. (Oakland Park), on 20 Jan 2004, by P. Howell, one of the Florida plant pest inspectors.

The species appears to be relatively rare, since no other specimens have been found in the many years of collecting and surveys in Florida since before 1900, including more recent intensive surveying in Florida. Kimball (1965) also did not report any such large epiplemid from all his studies of museum collections and the collecting he did for his Florida catalog. The new addition for Florida Epiplemidae came in too late to include in the new Florida Lepidoptera catalog (Heppner, 2003), but can now be added in as Nearctic species number 7654.1.

The Texas Lepidoptera Survey (TLS) sampling was done with the cooperation of Estero Llano Grande State Park, and Martha Garcia, superintendent. The Costa Rican specimen was photographed at the National Museum of Natural History (USNM), Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Florida specimens are from the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (FSCA).

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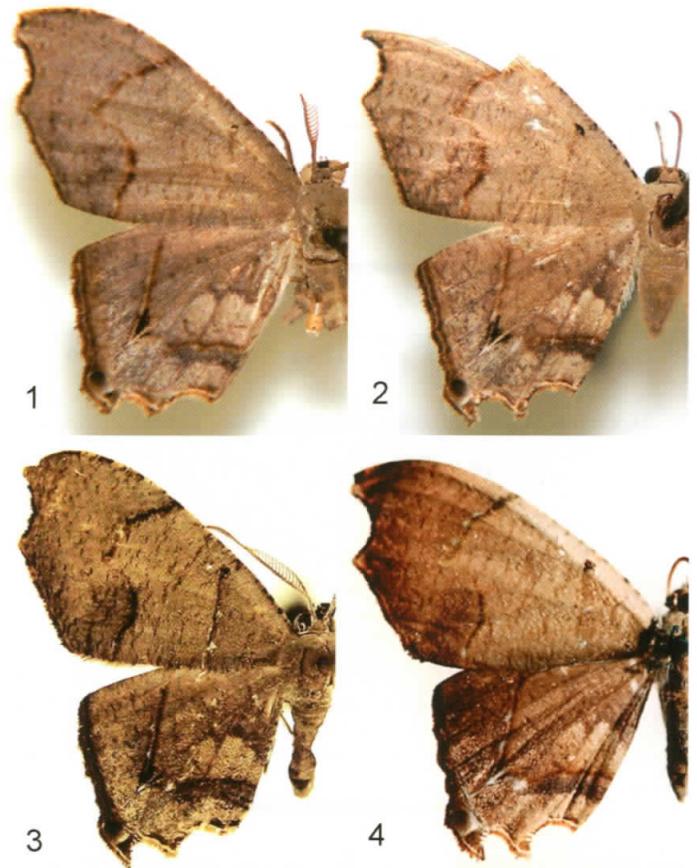


Fig. 1-4. *Trotorhombia metachromata* (Walker): 1) male (Florida, FSCA). 2) female (Florida, FSCA). 3) male (Texas, TLS). 4) female (Costa Rica, USNM).

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