

**Contribution to the knowledge of *Elodes sericea*
species-group with description of two new species
from Middle Asia (Coleoptera, Scirtidae)***

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Abstract. Two new species of the genus *Elodes* Latreille, 1796 from Uzbekistan (*Elodes jelineki* sp. nov.) and Kazakhstan (*Elodes gerdmuelleri* sp. nov.) are described. *Elodes orientalis* Iablokoff-Khnzorian, 1973 is redescribed as a valid species. These three species represent along with *Elodes sericea* Kiesenwetter, 1859, *E. eberti* Klausnitzer, 1970 and *E. persica* Klausnitzer, 1975 a distinct species-group, which is defined as *Elodes sericea* species-group. The new species are compared with other species of the *E. sericea* group and a key to identification of species of the group is proposed. Original description of *E. persica* Klausnitzer, 1975 is completed.

Key words. Coleoptera, Scirtidae, *Elodes sericea* species group, taxonomy, new species, identification key, central Asia, Palaearctic

Introduction

The fauna of Scirtidae of Middle Asia is by no means satisfactorily known. Descriptions of further new species as well as discoveries of some widely distributed Palaearctic species can be expected from Middle Asia in the future. Especially interesting is one species-group of the genus *Elodes* Latreille, 1796, the *E. sericea* species-group, which ranges from Middle Asia to Caucasus and Greece (Table 1). The number of known localities is so limited that no conclusions about the origin or the overlaps in distribution ranges of its species can be made. Probably it is a species-group with an Eastern Mediterranean-Turanian distribution. More detailed characteristics, possible in other taxa, can result only from better knowledge of the ranges of individual species (DE LATTIN 1967, KRYZHANOVSKY 2002, KABAK 2005, MÜLLER-MOTZFELD 2006).

* 138th contribution to the knowledge of Scirtidae