

Six new species of *Eucalantica* micro-moths discovered from the New World

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This is *Eucalantica costaricae*, a new species. Credit: Sohn & Nishida

The *Eucalantica* genus belongs to the relatively primitive micro-moth group, Yponomeutidae. Six new species have been described by Mr. Jae-Cheon Sohn from the University of Maryland, College Park, USA and Mr. Kenji Nishida from Universidad de Costa Rica, San José, Costa Rica and published in the open access taxonomy journal *Zookeys*.

"Yponomeutid moths are important group in tracing the evolution of plant association in Lepidoptera. In spite of this importance, the family has been neglected by systematists and its biodiversity and phylogeny remain poorly understood" comments Mr. Sohn, Ph. D. candidate. Previous descriptive works have concentrated on the Holarctic and Australian faunas, the species [diversity](#) of yponomeutids from the

Neotropics remains significantly underestimated as *Eucalantica* being a good example.

Eucalantica has been known by only a single Nearctic species. A review of the genus found six new species: *E. costaricae*, *E. ehecatlella*, *E. icarusella*, *E. powelli*, and *E. pumila*, all five from Costa Rica; *E. vaquero* from southern USA and Mexico. "Our discoveries suggest that a high diversity of *Eucalantica* occurs in the tropical highlands of Central America and the [genus](#) is more diverse and widely distributed than previously thought" adds Mr. Nishida.

The study demonstrates how poor is our knowledge on the real diversity of life on Earth. According to some estimates, only less than 20% of extant species are described. Thousands of [species](#) become extinct every year before they are named. Intensified taxonomic inventories and large-scale conservation measures may improve the situation towards more complete documentation and preservation of the wonderful world of biodiversity.

More information: Sohn J-C, Nishida K (2011) A taxonomic review of *Eucalantica* Busck (Lepidoptera: Yponomeutidae) with descriptions of six new species. *ZooKeys* 118: 75. [doi:10.3897/zookeys.118.956](https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.118.956)

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