

Press release – 10.02.2022



A Brazilian moth elected species of the year of the Swiss Systematics Society

Switzerland has a long tradition of contributing a large number of new species to the Catalogue of Life. The science of systematics continues to flourish in many Swiss institutions, highlighted each year by the Swiss Systematics Society (SSS), which since 2015 has elected a "new species of the year". At the society's annual meeting in November 2021, the members chose a beautiful Brazilian moth: *Diptychophora galvani* Landry and Becker, 2021.

This moth, with a wingspan of 10 to 12 mm, is known only from a few specimens from the Brazilian states of Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso. The species was dedicated to Professor Ricardo Galvão, the former director of the Brazilian National Institute of Space Research (INPE), whose reaction when he learned that his name was now associated with this insect was as follows.

“I am truly grateful to Bernard Landry and Vitor Becker for naming a new species of Lepidoptera in my honour. As a Brazilian deeply concerned about the preservation of our fantastic biomes and their biological diversity, receiving this accolade is quite significant. In the etymology of *Diptychophora galvani*, the authors justify naming this new species in my honour “for his courage in the face of professional adversity”. The episode they refer to was my attitude to publicly confront the President of Brazil when, in an international press conference, he accused the data provided by the INPE on the substantial increase of deforestation in the Amazon rainforest to be a lie. Certain of the correctness and quality of our data, as a Director of INPE, I stood up and challenged him to prove his assertion in a face-to-face discussion with me. The challenge was not accepted, and I was fired. We scientists must follow the noble directive that in scientific matters, there is no authority above the sovereignty of Science”.

By naming this small insect *Diptychophora galvani*, the zoologists thus underlined the courage of a fellow scientist who opposed the Brazilian government's devastating biodiversity policy.

Publication of the new species : Landry, B. & Becker, V. O. 2021. A taxonomic review of the genus *Diptychophora* Zeller (Lepidoptera, Pyralidae *sensu lato*, Crambinae) in Brazil, with descriptions of three new species. *Revue suisse de Zoologie* 128: 73-84. <https://doi.org/10.35929/RSZ.0036>

For more information on *Diptychophora galvani* : Bernard Landry, Muséum d'histoire naturelle de la ville de Genève. Tel : 022 418 63 42. Email : bernard.landry@ville-ge.ch

Photo legend (free of rights with mention of the author): *Diptychophora galvani*, Brazil. Photo Bernard Landry, modified by Christina Lehmann-Graber.

Photo of Professor Ricardo Galvão :

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ricardo_Galv%C3%A3o_\(2015\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ricardo_Galv%C3%A3o_(2015).jpg)

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About the SSS:

Since 2005, the Swiss Systematics Society (SSS) brings together researchers who study the diversity of living things, a science called systematics. The purpose of systematics is to make an inventory of all animal and plant species, extant and extinct, to describe them, to give them a name and classify them, and to study their relationships over time (phylogeny) and in space (biogeography). The SSS presents on its web pages the list of species described by researchers working in Swiss institutions since 2015: [New Species Swiss Made](#). In 2021, this list includes 158 new species.

The SSS is a member of the Biology Platform of the Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences.