NABA-NC 2014-05 Polygonus manueli

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**Polygonus manueli** Bell & Comstock, 1948, versus **Polygonus savignyi** (Latreille, 1824): potential change of scientific name


*Polygonus manueli* Bell & Comstock, 1948: 4, fig. 1. Type locality: Nova Bremen [=Dahlbergia], Santa Catarina, Brazil, in American Museum of Natural History, New York.

*Polygonus manueli* Bell & Comstock; Evans, 1952: 55, pl. 14.

*Polygonus savignyi* (Latreille); Evans, 1952: 54. Misidentification.

*Polygonus savignyi* (Latreille); Mielke & Casagrande, 2002: 40; Mielke, 2004: 75; Mielke, 2005: 318.

The scientific name for Manuel’s Skipper has been considered for years to be *Polygonus manueli* Bell & Comstock, 1948 (type locality Santa Catarina, Brazil), and this is how it is listed in the NABA checklist (2nd edition). However, Mielke & Casagrande (2002: 40) stated that they had examined a syntype of *Hesperia savignyi* Latreille, 1824, designated it as the lectotype for this name, and considered it to represent the same species as the holotype *P. manueli*. If so, based on priority, the scientific name of Manuel’s Skipper would become *Polygonus savignyi*, with *P. manueli* a junior subjective synonym of the nominate subspecies.

Mielke & Casagrande (2002) offered no evidence other than their assertion that *savignyi* and *manueli* pertain to the same species. Fortunately type materials for both taxa are well illustrated by Warren et al. (2012).

All recent major sources appear to have accepted the proposed synonymy. Probably reflecting this, searching using Google gives 1360 hits for “Polygonus manueli” but 1830 for “Polygonus savignyi”. The question that we have to decide upon, therefore, is whether or not there is overwhelming evidence that *Polygonus manueli* Bell & Comstock, described from southern Brazil is the same species as *P. savignyi* (Latreille) described from the “Antilles”, or not. Were the answer to be “no”, then given the very strong similarity of the type specimens of the two nominal species, which of them occurs in southern Texas could be a further issue to be resolved.

According to Evans (1952), the two species included in *Polygonus* (the other being *leo* (Gmelin, 1790)) are “very similar” – but as the Hammock Skipper (*P. leo*) is also included on the NABA list, this similarity is evidently not a problem. Thus if it is agreed that *savignyi* and *manueli* are not the same species, then the implication would be that a third species of *Polygonus* would have to be recognised. Mielke (2005) catalogued just two species in *Polygonus*, both polytypic.

References


