

## **New insights from re-examining labels and old specimens of the New Zealand black fly, *Austrosimulium australense* (Schiner) (Diptera: Simuliidae)**

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Re-examination of labels with important, old specimens of the New Zealand black fly, *Austrosimulium australense* (Schiner, 1868), held in Vienna (NHMW), Berlin (ZMHU), London (BMNH), and Auckland (NZAC) has revealed new information surrounding the taxonomic and collecting events associated with these specimens. The species *australense* was the first simuliid described in the Australasian Region when described as part of the “Novara” expedition publication by Schiner (NHMW). Tonnoir, based in Nelson, examined a specimen from Vienna for his 1925 revision of Australasian species, and placed it in his new genus *Austrosimulium* as the type-species for the genus: his placement has been accepted by nearly all subsequent researchers. An exception was Enderlein in Berlin, and we now know his 1930 assignment to the European genus *Wilhelmia* Enderlein was based on his examination of the same specimens in Vienna, but using alternative characters he favoured for defining genera. Literature suggests that a single simuliid specimen was collected from the Bay of Islands in the early 1840s and deposited in BMNH, and has been referred to by the nomen nudum ‘*caecutiens* Walker’. An unexpected discovery was this record, rather than referring to a single specimen, was in fact a pillbox containing about 450 specimens, all now confirmed as *australense*. We believe these specimens were collected by Colonial Secretary Sinclair near Waimate North about September 1844, when he was there with Governor FitzRoy for a peace conference resulting from Hone Heke’s cutting down of the flagstaff on Maiki Hill, Kororarereka on 8 July 1844. [crosbyt@landcareresearch.co.nz](mailto:crosbyt@landcareresearch.co.nz) [nzdcraig@ualberta.ca](mailto:nzdcraig@ualberta.ca)

