

Revision of the ant genus *Streblognathus* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae: Ponerinae)

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Abstract

The southern African ant genus *Streblognathus* has long been regarded as being monotypic but a morphological reappraisal of available specimens shows that there are two species: *Streblognathus aethiopicus* (F. Smith), which occurs in the southern karoo of the Eastern Cape, and *Streblognathus peetersi* **sp. nov.**, which occurs in the eastern grasslands of southern Africa. Workers and males are described and keyed. Male genitalia are illustrated and the significance of the large barbs on the penis valves is discussed.

Key words: taxonomy, Hymenoptera, Formicidae, Ponerinae, Ponerini, *Streblognathus*, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, male genitalia

Introduction

Streblognathus was named by Mayr (1862) to hold a single species *Streblognathus aethiopicus*, originally described as *Ponera aethiopica* by Smith (1858). Distribution of the genus is limited to grassland and southern karoo regions of southern Africa, and it has the largest worker ants in Africa, measuring up to 2.5 cm long. Like many large southern African ponerine ants, *Streblognathus* has lost the queen caste and instead, reproduction is undertaken by a single, mated worker, termed a gamergate (Ware *et al.* 1990; Peeters 1991). Mandibular glands of workers contain three types of pyrazines which, in a study based on two colonies, were found to occur in smaller quantities and in different proportions in the gamergate compared with the mated workers (Jones *et al.* 1998). Colony size of *S. aethiopicus* is moderately small ranging from 9 to 51 workers (Ware *et al.* 1990). Workers stridulate, apparently for alarm purposes, by moving the presclerite of the second gastral segment, which has ridges on it, against the posterior edge of the first gastral segment (Lewis 1896, Ware 1994).