Zootaxa 1385: 47–52 (2006)
www.mapress.com/zootaxa/

ISSN 1175-5326 (print edition)
ZOOTAXA
ISSN 1175-5334 (online edition)

1385

Redescription of *Triatoma melanica* Neiva & Lent, 1941, new status (Hemiptera: Reduviidae: Triatominae)

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Abstract

Triatoma brasiliensis melanica Neiva and Lent is elevated to species status based on comparison of its morphology, biology, ecology, crossing experiments, allozymes, and mtDNA sequences with those of other members of the *T. brasiliensis* species complex. The taxon is redescribed from specimens from northern Minas Gerais State, Brazil.

Key words: *Triatoma melanica* **stat. nov.**, *Triatoma brasiliensis* complex, Chagas disease vector, taxonomy, morphology, Brazil

Introduction

Individual specimens of *Triatoma brasiliensis* Neiva, 1911 vary greatly in color, a fact that has led to the description of two melanic forms as subspecies: *T. brasiliensis melanica* Neiva and Lent, 1941 and *T. brasiliensis macromelasoma* Galvão, 1956 (Neiva and Lent 1941; Galvão 1956). However, Lent and Wygodzinsky (1979) considered these subspecies to be synonyms of *T. brasiliensis*, stating that intergrading forms between them are frequent in the natural environment.

Studies of morphology (Costa 1997; Costa *et al.* 1997a), biology (Costa and Marchon-Silva 1998), ecology (Costa *et al.* 1998, 2002), crossing experiments (Costa *et al.* 2003b), allozymes (Costa *et al.* 1997b), and mtDNA sequences (Monteiro *et al.* 2004) have been carried out in order to clarify whether the melanic forms of *T. brasiliensis* species represent different phenotypic variations of the same species or are distinct evolutionary units. The results suggest that *T. brasiliensis melanica* is indeed an independent evolutionary

Accepted by C. Schaefer: 14 Nov. 2006; published: 21 Dec. 2006