



Two new species of the enigmatic genus *Stenophareus* (Opiliones: Laniatores: Stygnidae) from the Venezuelan Guiana Shield

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Abstract

Two new species of *Stenophareus* are described from the Guiana Shield region of Venezuela. *S. aonda* **sp. n.** (type-locality: Auyán-tepui, Bolívar) is characterized by ocular and tegumentary depigmentation and by extreme pedipalp and leg elongation, representing the first troglomorph stygnid. *S. guerreroi* **sp. n.** (type-locality: Chimantá-tepui, Bolívar) is distinguished by a swollen proximal-most tarsomere of leg I and by the presence of an anterior tubercle on the anal opercle. Putative phylogenetic affinities of the genus *Stenophareus* within the Stygninae are discussed.

Resumen

Se describen dos especies nuevas del género *Stenophareus* provenientes de la región del escudo guayanés de Venezuela. *S. aonda* **sp. n.** (localidad tipo: Auyán-tepui, Bolívar) es caracterizado por depigmentación ocular y del tegumento y pedipalpo y patas extremadamente largos, representando el primer estígnido troglomorfo. *S. guerreroi* **sp. n.** (localidad tipo: Chimantá-tepui, Bolívar) es diagnosticado por el engrosamiento del tarsómero más proximal de la pata I y presencia de un tubérculo anterior en el opérculo anal. Las afinidades filogenéticas putativas del género *Stenophareus* dentro de la subfamilia Stygninae son discutidas.

Key words: Arachnida, Stygninae, *Phareus*, taxonomy, biospeleology, tepuys

Introduction

Laniatorean harvestmen are mostly nocturnal arachnids, frequently associated to humid habitats. These characteristics probably facilitate colonization of hemiedaphic and hypogean environments, as suggested by their relatively common presence in karstic systems. A total of 24 species of Laniatores have been recorded for a great number of caves in Venezuela (Pérez & Mendes 2003). Among these, only two troglobitic species are known: *Trinella bordoni* (Muñoz-Cuevas) (Agoristenidae) from Cueva Francisco Zea in the karstic region of Perijá, northwestern Venezuela and *T. troglobia* Pinto-da-Rocha from Cueva de los Laureles, which also lies in the Perijá region. Two other undescribed species of the family Stygnommatidae with clear adaptations to hypogean life were reported by Pérez & Mendes (2003) for the Andean foothills and the coastal range.

In the present work we describe two new stygnid species from the mountains Auyán-tepui and Chimantá-tepui in the Venezuelan Guiana Shield and we place them in *Stenophareus* Goodnight & Goodnight, a poorly known genus of the subfamily Stygninae. This genus previously included only a single species, *S. roraimus*