



New ants (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) from Micronesia

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Abstract

Nine new species of ants collected in Micronesia are described and illustrated: *Camponotus eperiamorum* n. sp. (Pohnpei I.), *C. erythrocephalus* n. sp. (Yap I.), *C. flavicomans* n. sp. (Palau), *C. marianensis* n. sp. (Mariana Is.), *C. peleliuensis* n. sp. (Palau), *Pheidole recondita* n. sp. (Marianas and eastern Caroline Is), *Vollenhovia kaselela* n. sp. (Pohnpei I.), *V. mwereka* n. sp. (Pohnpei I.), and *V. pwidikidika* n. sp. (Pohnpei I.). They were discovered while cataloging the ant fauna of Micronesia, and several of them were already noted as possible new species when found in museum collections. Type series for five of the species include modern collections made during the course of this study.

Key words: Formicidae, ant, Micronesia, Pohnpei, Marianas, Palau, Yap, *Camponotus*, *Pheidole*, *Vollenhovia*

Introduction

Project Background

The insect fauna of Micronesia is fairly well understood for such a vast tropical area, not only because the small sizes and remoteness of its islands limit the number of species, but also because naturalists have traveled throughout the region since the 19th century. The *Insects of Micronesia* series, begun in 1954, has been the main venue for modern entomological reports about the area, but a study of the Formicidae (ants) has never been included. Micronesian formicid work was started by Drs. E. O. Wilson, R. W. Taylor, and M. R. Smith, but events and other projects precluded its completion; they borrowed and examined museum specimens, and Smith typed a complete inventory of known Micronesian collections, but the project went no further. I learned of this omission while making ant collections on the island of Pohnpei, and so I completed a faunistic study of the region that includes new collections, an identification key, detailed collection records, distribution maps, and a biogeographic discussion (Clouse, in press). Here I describe those Micronesian species examined during that study which appear to be as yet unnamed, known from more than one specimen, and not members of perceived “difficult” species complexes.

Although faunistic studies have traditionally also contained important taxonomic innovations, I have decided to present new species descriptions in this paper so that they may receive appropriate attention. Except for the forms collected exclusively by me on Pohnpei Island between 1994 and 2002, most of the specimens discussed here were already labeled as undetermined, possibly new, or “near” other species when I found them in the MCZ (Museum of Comparative Zoology), ANIC (Australian National Insect Collection), and NMNH (National Museum of Natural History) collections. Thus, they have long been ripe for detailed work, though revisions of their genera do not seem imminent.