



Two species of *Neocypholaelaps* from Sri Lanka (Acari: Ameroseiidae), with description of a new species

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Abstract

Two species of *Neocypholaelaps* Vitzthum are reported from Sri Lanka. One of them, *Neocypholaelaps ceylonicus* Narita & Moraes, **n. sp.**, is described based on adult females. The other, *Neocypholaelaps ampullula* (Berlese), originally described from Indonesia, is reported for the first time in Sri Lanka. Complementary morphological information about this species is provided based on the specimens collected in this study. A discussion is presented about the spermathecal apparatus of *Neocypholaelaps* species.

Key words: Ascoidea, palm tree, taxonomy

Introduction

Twenty-one species of Ameroseiidae (Acari: Mesostigmata) have been considered to belong to the genus *Neocypholaelaps* Vitzthum (Moraes & Narita, 2010). These have been reported almost exclusively from Africa, Asia and Oceania (Evans, 1963; Baker & Delfinado-Baker, 1985). The only exception refers to a species reported from Brazil (Arruda & Moraes, 2002; Moraes & Narita, 2010).

Species of this genus have been found mainly either on coconut inflorescences, phoretically attached to insects or in their habitats (Evans, 1963; Ishikawa, 1968; Elsen, 1972; Delfinado-Baker & Baker, 1983; Baker & Delfinado-Baker, 1985). Haq (2001) reported a large infestation of *Neocypholaelaps stridulans* (Evans) on coconut inflorescences in Kerala, southern India, apparently causing button drop. There is no previous record of *Neocypholaelaps* from Sri Lanka, an island country less than a hundred kilometers from the southern rim of Kerala, and where coconut is widely cultivated. In a survey conducted in Sri Lanka in 2003, specimens of Mesostigmata were observed on inflorescences of coconut and other plant species, causing no visible damage. They were found to belong to two different species of *Neocypholaelaps*. One of them is a new species that is here described. The other has already been described, but the original description lacks some morphological information which is here provided, based on the specimens collected in this study.

Material and methods

Specimens were mounted in Hoyer's medium and observed under phase contrast microscopy. Idiosomal setal notation is that of Lindquist & Evans (1965), as applied to the Ameroseiidae by Moraes & Narita (2010). Measurements of each structure are given in micrometres, with the averages for the individuals examined followed (in parentheses) by the respective ranges (if measurement varied). Terminology of spermathecal apparatus is based on Athias-Henriot (1968).