



Article

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Present status of Sicariidae (Arachnida: Araneae) in the Afrotropical region

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Abstract

In this paper the present state of knowledge of the family Sicariidae in the Afrotropical region is discussed. The Sicariidae in the Afrotropical region, as it stands at present, consists of two genera, viz. *Sicarius* Walckenaer, 1847 (subfamily Sicariinae) with six species: *S. albospinosus* Purcell, 1908, *S. damarensis* Lawrence, 1928, *S. dolichocephalus* Lawrence, 1928, *S. hahni* (Karsch, 1878), *S. spatulatus* Pocock, 1900, and *S. testaceus* Purcell, 1908 and *Loxosceles* Heineken & Lowe, 1835 (subfamily Loxoscelinae) with 13 species: *L. fontainei* Millot, 1941, *L. foutadjalloni* Millot, 1941, *L. lacroixi* Millot, 1941, *L. meruensis* Tullgren, 1910, *L. newvillei* Simon, 1909, *L. pallidecolorata* (Strand, 1906), *L. parrami* Newlands, 1981, *L. rufescens* (Dufour, 1820), *L. smithi* Simon, 1897, *L. speluncarum* Simon, 1893, *L. spinulosa* Purcell, 1904, *L. valida* Lawrence, 1964 and *L. vonwredei* Newlands, 1980. *Loxosceles parrami* Newlands, 1981 is here renamed to *L. parramae* (Newlands, 1981), as it was named for a Miss Parram. *Loxosceles valida* Lawrence, 1964 is here transferred to the genus *Drymusa* Simon, 1893 (Drymusidae) and three species of *Loxosceles* is revalidated (*L. bergeri* Strand, 1906, *L. pilosa* Purcell, 1908 and *L. simillima* Lawrence, 1927).

Keywords: Sicariidae, Araneae, Afrotropical region, Drymusidae, *Loxosceles*, *Sicarius*

Introduction

The family Sicariidae is considered to be one of the medically important spider families of the world. A revision of the species is therefore considered to be of great importance for medical research and treatment.

The first sicariid species described from the Afrotropical region in the family Sicariidae was *Sicarius hahni* (Karsch, 1878), described as *Hexomma hahnii* from the Hahn Mission in Namibia. Since then five other species, all from the southern African sub-region, have been added to the genus *Sicarius*. The first *Loxosceles* species recorded from the Afrotropical region are *L. speluncarum* Simon, 1893 from the Pretoria area in South Africa. At present there are 12 *Loxosceles* species known from the Afrotropical region. Two cosmopolitan species, *Loxosceles rufescens* (Dufour, 1820) and *L. rufipes* (Lucas, 1834) has also been reported from this region.

The most recent research on the taxonomy of this family in the Afrotropical region is found in the PhD thesis of Newlands (1986). In this thesis, of which the results were never published, several changes and a new species were listed, creating nomenclature problems. For the present publication all traceable types were examined to validate the described species. Type localities with geo-reference data, collection numbers and new lectotypes were designated to solve some problems.

Material And Methods

All the type specimens that could be obtained on loan were studied and are discussed here. Some other material from type localities was also studied for comparison where types could not be found. Drawings of the male palps and female genitalia were made from the specimens or redrawn from published records. Drawings were simplified to exclude distracting detail and to make all drawings uniform, as they were made from different sources. Drawings were made with CORAL DRAW X4. Co-ordinates given in square brackets are not included on the specimen labels, but were looked up on maps and added.