

An illustrated key to the New World genera of Philonthina Kirby (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae), with morphological, taxonomical and distributional notes

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Abstract

An illustrated key to the 29 genera of Philonthina currently known in the New World is provided, based on adult morphological characters. Updated information on the morphology, taxonomic history, bionomics and distribution of the Philonthina in the study area is also provided.

Key words: Staphylininae, Philonthina, New World, taxonomy, distribution

Introduction

The subtribe Philonthina Kirby 1837, with 65 genera and about 2500 species currently cited (Herman 2001; Newton & Thayer 2005; Newton, unpublished database catalog), is the largest subtribe within Staphylinini in both number of genera and species, and also the most speciose subtribe within Staphylininae, accounting for more than one third of the species recorded for this subfamily (ca. 7000 spp.) (Herman 2001; Newton, unpublished database catalog). According to the above-mentioned authors, 29 genera of Philonthina are known to occur in the New World with over 700 species recorded. The species of the megadiverse and cosmopolitan genus *Philonthus* Stephens represent almost one half of that total, with 338 species currently recorded in the New World (Newton, unpublished database catalog). The large number of *Philonthus* species to be studied (over 1300 spp. worldwide) has been a challenging factor to achieve a modern generic classification of the subtribe. Additionally, most recent revisionary studies on the genera of Philonthina have been based on restricted regional scales (e.g. Smetana 1995; Schillhammer 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003; Hromádka 2008a,b, 2009, 2010a,b,c; Li *et al.* 2010).

As far as the New World is concerned, Navarrete-Heredia *et al.* (2002), Newton *et al.* (2000), Smetana (1995) and Coiffait & Sáiz (1968) have been the only modern authors to provide a key to the local genera of Philonthina. The first three contributions are restricted to the Nearctic region (Newton *et al.* 2000; Smetana 1995) and Mexico (Navarrete-Heredia *et al.* 2002). Thus, for such cases, the only connections to the Neotropical fauna are those genera that also occur in or north of Mexico (12 out of 29 genera). Smetana (1995), who revised the genera of Philonthina of America north of Mexico, deserves particular mention. This author provided a comprehensive basis for a modern taxonomic study of the subtribe, including a review of both the taxonomic and natural history, cladistic analysis, and a discussion of diagnostic characters and study techniques. Coiffait & Sáiz (1968), on the other hand, included only four of the currently valid genera of Philonthina in their key, as they restricted their study to the Chilean fauna of Staphylinidae. Since then, there has been no attempt to develop an identification tool for the genera of Philonthina from the New World. Concerning South America, the lack of both local specialists and available literature, and the scarcity of reliably identified material in local collections have made it almost impossible to understand the local diversity of the subtribe.

According to Newton (unpublished database catalog), 29 genera of Philonthina are currently known to occur in the New World. Among these, 17 genera are known only from the Neotropical region. Among the remaining 12 genera, *Laetulonthus* Moore & Legner is restricted to the Nearctic region and Mexico, and the other 11 genera are widespread to nearly worldwide taxa (Herman 2001; Newton & Thayer 2005). Most of the Neotropical genera

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