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Description of a new genus and thirteen new species of Ctenidae (Araneae, Ctenidae) from the Chocó region of Ecuador

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Abstract

The genus *Choccoctenus* n. gen. is established for a group of Ctenidae with a unique ventral and spine-like retrolateral tibial apophysis, primarily found in the Chocó-Tumbes-Magdalena corridor. Thirteen new species are described: *Choccoctenus otonga* n. sp., *C. neblina* n. sp., *C. cuchilla* n. sp., *C. fantasma* n. sp., *C. waïtti* n. sp., *C. cappuccino* n. sp., *C. lasdamas* n. sp., *C. suffuscus* n. sp., *C. otongachi* n. sp., *C. kashakara* n. sp., *C. piemontana* n. sp., *C. luchoi* n. sp. and *C. duendecito* n. sp. *Ctenus acanthothenoides* Schmidt and *Enoploctenus miserabilis* (Strand) are transferred to *Choccoctenus*.

Key words: spider, new genus, Acantheinae, Cloud forest specialist, habitat separation

Introduction

From Panama to the northwestern corner of South America, the Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena corridor is considered a biodiversity hotspot (Conservation International 2013). The evaluation of the biodiversity of this hotspot is largely based on the study of vertebrate animals and plants, but an important group of organisms have not yet been studied—arthropods (Myers *et al.* 2000). Spiders are one of the most diverse arthropod groups of the planet (45 674 species) (World Spider Catalogue 2015), yet almost nothing is known of the spider biodiversity found in the Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena corridor. In 2014, as part of a National Geographic grant, we set out to study the spider biodiversity of the cloud and premontane forests of northwestern Ecuador. We present here the first results with the description of 13 new species in the new genus *Choccoctenus*, from the spider family Ctenidae Keyserling 1877. The family Ctenidae includes 493 species spread out in 41 genera (World Spider Catalog 2015), they are found in tropical and temperate forests around the world (Polotow & Jocqué 2014). In the New World, 26 genera occur, the most speciose one being *Ctenus* Walckenaer 1805, with 231 species. Ctenids are small to large (4.0–40.0mm), mostly cribellate (except *Acanthoctenus* Keyserling 1877) entelegyne spiders with 8 eyes arranged in three rows (2-4-2) (Griswold *et al.*, 2005; Jocqué & Dippenaar-Schoeman 2006). They are nocturnal predators (Griswold *et al.*, 2005; Polotow & Brescovit 2014) hiding during the day, that run at night on the ground (Höfer *et al.* 1994; Silva 2003; Jocqué *et al.*, 2005) but a few species are also known to be arboreal (Polotow & Brescovit 2008). Ctenid spiders are also good candidates for monitoring invertebrate diversity in rainforests (Jocqué *et al.* 2005) and have been used in diversity inventories and ecological studies (Höfer *et al.* 1994; Gasnier & Höfer 2001; Jocqué *et al.* 2005; Rego *et al.* 2005).

In the New World, revisionary taxonomical work has been done mainly by Brescovit (1996), Höfer & Brescovit (2000), Simó & Brescovit (2001), Silva (2004), and Polotow & Brescovit (2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2012 and 2013); but mostly regarding genera and species from Brazil, Peru and Colombia—no studies of Ecuadorian Ctenidae have been done. Actually, the Ctenidae fauna of Ecuador is poorly known, only 13 species are known to occur (Dupérré 2015) and all were described in 1800–1900th centuries with poor locality data and often lacking illustrations (Dupérré 2014).

In addition to the genus with 13 new species from Ecuador, in this paper the taxonomic status of two other ctenid species is discussed. In 1956, Schmidt published a paper on invasive spider associated with importation of