

Four new species and new records for the spider genus *Synotaxus* Simon, 1895 (Araneae: Synotaxidae) from Brazil

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Abstract

Four new species of *Synotaxus* Simon are described and illustrated based on material from northern and northeastern Brazil: *S. brescoviti* n. sp., *S. bonaldoi* n. sp., *S. siolii* n. sp. and *S. itabaiana* n. sp. New records are presented for *S. longicaudatus* (Keyserling), *S. monoceros* (Caporiacco) and *S. waiwai* Agnarsson. A map with all species records included is provided.

Key words: Taxonomy, zoogeography, distribution range, Neotropical region

Introduction

The spider genus *Synotaxus* was described by Simon (1895) to include two species of small, *Argyrodes*-like Neotropical spiders: *S. turbinatus* Simon and *S. uncatius* Simon. The genus was originally placed in Theridiidae (Simon 1895, Levi & Levi 1962, Exline & Levi 1965). Forster *et al.* (1990), however, suggested that *Synotaxus* is related to several genera of small spiders of Austral temperate distribution, including *Physoglenes* Simon, a genus with a problematic history of familial placements. This group was hypothesized as sister to Theridiidae+Nesticidae, and received the name Synotaxidae, based on Simon's (1895) tribal-group Synotaxeae. The monophyly of Synotaxidae, as well as its phylogenetic proximity to the Theridiidae-Nesticidae clade was later corroborated by Griswold *et al.* (1998) and Agnarsson (2003, 2004).

According to Agnarsson (2003), *Synotaxus* monophyly is supported by at least 10 morphological and behavioral characters. This genus can be easily recognized, and separated from similar araneoids, by its characteristics “chicken-wire” shaped web (Eberhard 1977: figs. 1, 3; Eberhard 1995: fig. 1; Agnarsson 2003: fig. 6, 2004: fig. 95A) and by the