

New species of darkling beetles (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae) from San Salvador Island, Bahamas

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Abstract

In preparation for a survey and annotated checklist of the Tenebrionidae of San Salvador Island, Bahamas, nine new species of darkling beetles are described. All are so far known only from this island and probably endemic. The majority of them are flightless. All inhabit maritime sand scrub habitats. The new taxa, in the sequence described herein, are: *Trientoma jilae*, **n. sp.**, *Trientoma voegeliolum*, **n. sp.**, *Branchus geraceorum*, **n. sp.**, *Adelina bacardi*, **n. sp.**, *Blapstinus kalik*, **n. sp.**, *Diastolinus this*, **n. sp.**, *Diastolinus that*, **n. sp.**, *Nautes guanahani*, **n. sp.**, *Lobopoda deyrupi*, **n. sp.** Digital images of the holotypes are included. Diagnoses of the new species, with comparisons

among related ones, are provided, and notes on habitats and collections are given. One species, *Blapstinus humilis* Casey, is brought out of synonymy under *B. fuscus* Casey and provisionally recognized as valid, pending further revisionary work.

Key words: Bahamas, beach insects, darkling beetles, images of holotypes, island endemism, maritime scrub, new species, San Salvador Island, Tenebrionidae

Introduction

San Salvador Island, centrally located in the Bahamian archipelago, is the site of the first landfall made by Columbus and crew on 12 October 1492. After more than five centuries of European settlement, however, the “Age of Discovery” has not ended for this small island. While much of the geology and biota are well known, certain groups of insects have been neglected. The nine new species of Tenebrionidae described in this paper exemplify this, with most having been discovered with only 14 days of recent focused fieldwork, and supplemented by examination of unidentified specimens in the collection at the Gerace Research Center, San Salvador, and other institutions. Prior to this study, Tenebrionidae were listed only at the family level for San Salvador (Elliott 1993) and a review of entomological studies in the Bahamas (Elliott 2003) showed that darkling beetles had never been a focal group of any specialist. A few San Salvador records of widespread species had been reported in two revisionary studies (Campbell 1971; Watrous and Triplehorn 1982). Only 28 species were known from the Bahamian region at the onset of my studies (Steiner 2005a, 2005b).

With the availability of the Gerace Research Center (formerly the Bahamian Field Station) to biologists, San Salvador, by default, can be expected to receive more thorough coverage in faunal surveys, relative to the more isolated islands without such facilities. The focus on Tenebrionidae as a “target taxon” on this 161 km² island has resulted in the discovery of a surprisingly rich fauna for a relatively small and remote island, perhaps richer than expected for some larger Bahamian islands, with a high number of probable island endemics. In preparation for an annotated checklist of the darkling beetles of San Salvador, with images of all known species and some habitat description (as part of a planned survey and atlas of the Tenebrionidae of the Bahamian region), the new taxa are proposed here. A key to the species known from San Salvador will be provided in that work in progress, and keys to species Caribbean-wide will appear in reviews of selected genera.

Methods

Three visits for sampling beetles on San Salvador were made, two of which were 4-day