New species and records of the genus *Chelonus* Panzer, 1806 (Braconidae: Cheloninae) from China

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Abstract

Three subgenera of *Chelonus* Panzer (1806): *Areselonus* Braet (1999), *Baculonus* Braet & van Achterberg (2001) and *Megachelonus* Baker (1926) are recorded for the first time from China. The species of *Chelonus (Areselonus) chailini* Walker & Huddleson is reported for the first time, and new host information is provided. The subgenus of *Baculonus* Braet & van Achterberg, 2001 has been recorded only from the Neotropical region before this study. *Chelonus* (*Baculonus*) *icteribasis* **sp. nov.**, represents the first record of this group from the Old World. Two new species of subgenus *Megachelonus*, i.e., *C.* (*M.*) *macros* **sp. nov.** and *C.* (*M.*) *longqiensis* **sp. nov.**, are described from China. A key to the six currently known *Megachelonus* species is included to facilitate future identifications.

Key words: Braconidae, Cheloninae, *Chelonus*, *Areselonus*, *Baculonus*, *Megachelonus*, new species, China

Introduction

Chelonus Panzer is a large cosmopolitan genus with 356 known species (Yu *et al.*, 2005). The members of this genus are ovo-larval endoparsitoids; the host larva is killed during its final instar. Many *Chelonus* species become natural enemies of Lepidoptera which are considered pests of several crops. Jones observed numerous associations between the genus *Chelonus* and *Spodoptera*, like *Chelonus inanitus*, a parasitoid of *Spodoptera littoralis* Boisduval, *S. exigua* Hübner and *S. frugiperda* Simth (Lepidoptera, Noctuidae) (Jones, 1985). Another example is *Chelonus insularis* Cresson which is an important agent in the biological control of the fall armyworm, *S. frugiperda*, a pest that causes severe damages in corn fields in South America (Silva-Junior *et al.*, 2000). Therefore, they may play an important role in the ecosystem.