



Review and cladistic analysis of the Neotropical tarantula genus *Epebopus* Simon 1892 (Araneae: Theraphosidae) with notes on the Aviculariinae

RICK C. WEST¹, SAMUEL D. MARSHALL², CAROLINE SAYURI FUKUSHIMA^{3,4} & ROGÉRIO BERTANI⁴

¹3436 Blue Sky Place, Victoria, B.C., CA. E-mail: rickcwest@shaw.ca

²Department of Biological Sciences, 317 Bienvenu Hall, Northwestern State University Natchitoches, LA. E-mail: marshalls@nsula.edu

³Instituto de Biociências, Departamento de Zoologia, Universidade de São Paulo. E-mail: carolsayuri@butantan.gov.br

⁴Instituto Butantan, Av. Vital Brazil 1500, 05503–900, São Paulo SP. E-mail: rbert@butantan.gov.br

Abstract

The tarantula genus *Epebopus* Simon 1892 is reviewed and includes the type species, *E. murinus* (Walckenaer 1837), and *E. uatuman* Lucas, Silva & Bertani 1992, *E. cyanognathus* West & Marshall 2000, *E. rufescens* West & Marshall 2000 and *Epebopus foliatus*, sp. nov., from Guyana. *Epebopus violaceus* Mello-Leitão 1930 is transferred to *Tapinauchenius* Ausserer, where it is a senior synonym of *Tapinauchenius purpureus* Schmidt 1995 *new synonymy*. *Epebopus fossor* Pocock 1903 is considered a *nomen dubium*. *Epebopus* occurs in northeastern South America where it is known only from Brazil, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. Spiders of the genus are generally fossorial; however, *Epebopus murinus* has a developmental stage that is arboreal. A cladistic analysis of the Theraphosidae retrieves the Aviculariinae as monophyletic, including *Avicularia* Lamarck, *Iridopelma* Pocock 1901, *Pachistopelma* Pocock 1901, *Tapinauchenius*, *Psalmopoeus* Pocock, *Epebopus*, *Stromatopelma* Karsch and *Heteroscodra* Pocock, having as a synapomorphy the well-developed scopulae on tarsi and metatarsi I–II that is very laterally extended.

Key words: Aviculariinae, systematics, *Epebopus*, Guyana, cladistic analysis, theraphosid behavior

Introduction

The Theraphosidae are found on all continents, except Antarctica. More than 900 species are described, consisting roughly of a third of all described mygalomorph species (Platnick 2008). Most theraphosids are found in tropical areas but some representatives live in subtropical and temperate regions. They are mainly terrestrial in habit, living in burrows and other natural cavities or under rocks and fallen logs. Arboreal forms are found mainly in the tropical New World but also in Africa and Asia. The taxonomy of this family is very confused and taxonomic revisions are rare (Raven 1990). Cladistic analyses of relationship of species and genera are still rare and there was only one attempt to recover the cladistic relationships of all theraphosid subfamilies (Raven 1985). Therefore, the taxonomic position of several genera in theraphosid subfamilies is controversial, as is the composition of the Aviculariinae.

Simon (1892) created the Avicularieae, including only *Avicularia* and *Tapinauchenius*, then characterized by the absence of a line of setae dividing the tarsal scopulae (i.e., entire or undivided scopula) of leg IV, legs without spines, and posterior legs longer than anterior ones. Later, Pocock (1901) included *Pachistopelma* and *Iridopelma* as well as *Epebopus* and *Psalmopoeus* in the Avicularieae. He also suggested the inclusion of the West African genera *Scodra* Becker 1879 (= *Stromatopelma*) and *Heteroscodra*. Simon (1903) included the