



New species of flightless katydids from South Africa (Orthoptera: Tettigoniidae: Meconematinae)

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Abstract

Four new species (*Amyttacta marakelensis* n. sp., *A. farrelli* n. sp., *Paracilacris mordax* n. sp., and *P. periclitatus* n. sp.) of South African Meconematinae (Orthoptera: Tettigoniidae) are described, and keys to genera *Amyttacta* and *Paracilacris* are provided.

Key words: South African katydids, Meconematinae, new species

Introduction

South African Meconematinae were reviewed by Naskrecki (1996), who listed nine species from this country. Below we describe four additional, new South African species of the Meconematinae. This includes two new species of the genus *Paracilacris* Chopard, a rather enigmatic taxon placed by Naskrecki in the informal *Cyr-taspis*-group of the Meconematinae, in itself a rather poorly diagnosed subfamily of the Tettigoniidae (see Naskrecki 1996 for a discussion.) The remaining two species belong to *Amyttacta* Beier, members of the *Amytta*-group, a lineage never before recorded south of Zimbabwe. The chiefly West and Central African *Amytta*-group was reviewed by Beier (1965), and additional species were described by Beier (1967), Roy (1967), Ragge and Roy (1971), Gorochov (1993, 1994), Hemp (2001), and Naskrecki (2008).

South African Meconematinae are small (12–23 mm), usually robust-legged katydids, with light green or brown body coloration. All known S. African species of this group are brachypterous or micropterous, standing in a sharp contrast to primarily arboreal, mostly fully winged West and Central African members of this subfamily. All species in S. Africa appear to be associated with grasslands or open edges of *Podocarpus* forests, and have not been collected from trees or vegetation taller than 1–2 m.

Also, unlike the mostly insectivorous members of the Meconematinae from other parts of Africa, S. African species appear to be chiefly graminivorous. Data are lacking for most species, but at least two of the new species described below have been repeatedly seen feeding of seeds and flowers of several species of grasses. While individuals of both new species of *Paracilacris* were seen during the day, their feeding and reproductive activities were observed only at night, approximately between the hours 20:00 and 1:00. Males of both *Paracilacris* and *Amyttacta* were recorded singing from low vegetation, up to 1 m above the ground.