



A colorful new species of the digger wasp genus *Pseudoplisus* Ashmead from the Southwestern United States (Hymenoptera: Apoidea, Crabronidae)

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Abstract

A new species of apoid wasps, *Pseudoplisus willcoxi* sp. nov., is described from Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado. It is compared with all other species currently assigned to the genus. It has a remarkable overall color pattern, unique in *Pseudoplisus*, and a restricted collecting record: only a single specimen was collected outside of the Willcox area in Arizona (defined here as including the Animas area, New Mexico). Additionally, of the 34 remaining specimens, one was collected in 1974 and all other after 2001. In the present paper, the new species is diagnosed, described, and the relevant characters are illustrated. The geographic distribution and its heterogeneous collecting record are briefly discussed.

Key words: *Pseudoplisus*, Apoidea, Crabronidae, Bembicinae, Gorytina, digger wasp, sand wasp, new species, taxonomy

Introduction

Pseudoplisus is a genus in the Gorytina within the Bembicini, the so-called sand wasps. Bohart (1969b) subdivided *Pseudoplisus* in six species-groups. One of them, the *phaleratus*-group, is quite isolated within the genus, which has prompted Nemkov (2006) to raise this group to the genus *Saygorytes*. *Pseudoplisus* (excluding *Saygorytes*) currently comprises 25 described species. Four of them are known from Africa, but the remaining are New World elements, most of which are confined to the southwestern United States and Mexico (Bohart and Menke 1976; Pulawski 2008). The taxonomy of the New World species of *Pseudoplisus* has been covered by Bohart (1969a, b), and no new species have been described since.

On various collecting trips to southeastern Arizona between 2001 and 2007, I (together with students and colleagues) collected fewer than 35 specimens of *Pseudoplisus* in total. Thirty of these specimens were markedly different from any other *Pseudoplisus* known to me based on the unique coloration alone, and finally proved to represent an undescribed species. A single specimen of the new species, collected by Richard M. Bohart, in 1974, is now deposited in the CAS and bears an identification label in Bohart's handwriting "*Pseudoplisus willcoxi* n. sp. R.M. Bohart". Three more specimens are known to me: a female from Colorado, which is the only specimen known from this state, and two specimens from Animas, New Mexico, which is a locality quite close to the Willcox area.

The purpose of this paper is to formally describe this attractive species, to provide diagnostic characters to differentiate it from other *Pseudoplisus*, to give illustrations of significant characters and a distribution map, and, finally, to make the name available for an ongoing cladistic analysis of the Gorytina by P.G. Nemkov and W.J. Pulawski.