



First record of the hygropetric genus *Oocyclus* Sharp (Coleoptera: Hydrophilidae) from Laos, with description of a new species

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Abstract

The genus *Oocyclus* Sharp, 1882 is recorded from Laos for the first time. Two species are recognized, including a new species: *O. rupicola* sp. n. and *O. thailensis* Short et Swanson, 2005. Male genital segments and female spermathecal organs are illustrated, and the latter is also described for each species. SEM photographs of several useful taxonomic features are provided. Digital photographs of the holotype of *O. rupicola* are provided (online version in color). A key to the species of the genus from the Indochina peninsula is given.

Key words: Coleoptera, Hydrophilidae, *Oocyclus*, new record, new species, Laos, hygropetric habitats, spermatheca, taxonomy

Introduction

The genus *Oocyclus* Sharp, 1882 (Hydrophilidae: Hydrophilinae: Laccobiini) is widely distributed in the Indo-Malayan and Neotropical Regions, comprising 31 species and a single subspecies (Hansen, 1999; Short & Hebauer, 2006). Species of the genus are generally restricted to hygropetric habitats, and it is perhaps for that reason that specimens of the genus are relatively rare in most museum collections (Short & Perkins, 2004). The hygropetric habitat is important for the development, or life cycle of some aquatic or semi-aquatic insects, such as Hemiptera, Trichoptera, Diptera, and Coleoptera (e.g., Ward, 1992; Vitheepradit & Sites, 2007). Therefore, a better understanding of the fauna of hygropetric habitats will add to our knowledge of the biodiversity and ecology of inland water biotopes. Several studies on the genus *Oocyclus* were published in recent years. Hebauer and Wang (1998) described eight species and a single subspecies from the Indo-Malayan Region and provided a key to all known species. Subsequently, Short & Perkins (2004) and Short & Swanson (2005) described eight and six new species from Mesoamerica and Thailand respectively. Moreover, Short & Perkins (2004) provided details on the habitat and collecting methods of representatives of this genus.

In 2008, I had an opportunity to conduct fieldwork in Laos, a landlocked Asian country located in the Indochina peninsula. Laos and adjacent region are well known to possess high biological diversity and endemism, and sadly, also a high rate of habitat loss rate; consequently, the region is considered a biodiversity hotspot (Mittermeier *et al.*, 1998; Myers *et al.*, 2000). I was able to collect *Oocyclus* species from a wet rock surface in central Laos. After careful examination, the individuals were confirmed to comprise two species: *O. thailensis* Short et Swanson, 2005, and an undescribed species which were cohabitating on the same rock face.

Material and methods

In this study I used dried or 80% ethanol preserved specimens. Observations and dissections were mainly carried out using Olympus SZ40 stereoscopic microscope and Olympus BX40 compound light microscope;