



## A new species of *Asphinctopone* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae: Ponerinae) from Tanzania

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### Abstract

*Asphinctopone* is a rarely encountered genus of ponerine ants, previously known only from the wet forest zones of West and central Africa. In the most recent revision of the genus Bolton & Fisher synonymised the three previously described species under *A. sylvestrii* Santschi and described one new but very closely related species, *A. differens* Bolton & Fisher. A very distinctive new species, *Asphinctopone pilosa* **sp. n.**, is described from Tanzania and represents the first record of this genus from East Africa. Modifications to the diagnosis of the genus and an updated key to the species of *Asphinctopone* are presented. An analysis of the distribution records of *Asphinctopone*, using BIOCLIM and DOMAIN as implemented in DIVA-GIS 7.1 to provide preliminary predictions of the potential range of the genus, is also provided.

**Key words:** Africa, *Asphinctopone*, new species, taxonomy, distribution, Bioclim, Domain

### Introduction

*Asphinctopone* is a very small genus of rarely encountered Afrotropical ants in the subfamily Ponerinae, tribe Ponerini. The genus was first described by Santschi (1914) with a single species, *A. sylvestrii*. Two more species were subsequently described: *A. lucidus* (Weber 1949) and *A. lamottei* (Bernard 1953), the latter originally ascribed by Bernard to a new genus, *Lepidopone*, but subsequently placed in *Asphinctopone* by Brown (1953). In a recent revision of the genus, Bolton & Fisher (2008) synonymised all three previously described species and described one additional species, bringing the total number of described species to two. Of these *A. differens* (Bolton & Fisher 2008) is known only from the holotype (collected in the Central African Republic), while *A. sylvestrii* (now including *A. lucidus* and *A. lamottei*) has been recorded at least 22 times in West and Central Africa (Bolton & Fisher 2008, Fisher 2010).

A single *Asphinctopone* specimen was collected by hand at night during a survey of the Kilindi Forest Reserve (Nguu Mountains, Kilindi District, Tanzania); this was one of 15 sites in Tanzania surveyed during a project investigating ground-dwelling ant and beetle diversity in the Eastern Arc Mountains and Coastal Forests Hotspot of Tanzania and Kenya.

### Methods

Sample collection was carried out under COSTECH permit No. 2005-269-NA-2005-57 and the samples exported under the Tanzanian Ministry of Wildlife trophy export certificate No. 48157.

Measurements were taken using a Leica MZ16 stereomicroscope equipped with an ocular micrometer calibrated with a graticule; each measurement was repeated three times and the average is reported. Specimens were photographed using a Leica DFC 420 digital camera connected to the same microscope; montage images were produced using Leica Application Systems (LAS) montage V3.4 and edited with Adobe Photoshop.