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Revision of the southern South American species of *Philonthus* Stephens (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae)

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Abstract

The southern South American species of the genus *Philonthus* Stephens, 1829 (Staphylininae: Staphylinini) are revised using characters of external morphology and male and female genitalia. Three species of *Philonthus* are transferred to the genus *Belonuchus* Nordmann, 1837 resulting in the following new combinations: *B. aluticollis* (Bernhauer, 1921), *B. flavicoxis* (Bernhauer, 1912) and *B. weiserianus* (Bernhauer, 1921). Twenty-five valid species are recognized for the region in the present study: *Philonthus aeruginosus* Nordmann 1837, *P. argus* Herman 2001, *P. bicoloristylus* Chani-Posse 2004, *P. bonariensis* Bernhauer 1909, *P. convexicollis* Lynch-Arribálzaga 1884, *P. cribriventris* Bernhauer 1912, *P. discoideus* (Gravenhorst, 1802), *P. figulus* Erichson 1840, *P. flavolimbatus* Erichson 1840, *P. hepaticus* Erichson 1840, *P. jenseni* Bernhauer 1912, *P. longicornis* Stephens 1832, *P. lynchi* Bernhauer & Schubert 1914, *P. pallipes* Blanchard 1842, *P. pauxillus* Solsky 1868, *P. politus* (Linnaeus, 1758), *P. quadraticeps* Boheman 1858, *P. rectangulus* Sharp 1874, *P. rubromaculatus* Blanchard 1842, *P. ruficauda* Bernhauer 1934, *P. sericans* (Gravenhorst, 1802), *P. stenocephalus* Scheerpeltz 1972, *P. varians* (Paykull, 1789). Two new species are described: *P. floresi* and *P. bruchianus*. *Philonthus feralis* Erichson 1840, previously recorded for this region, is also redescribed. Diagnoses, redescrptions or descriptions, illustrations, bionomic information and distribution maps for all species are presented. An identification key to the southern South American species of the genus is provided. Lectotypes are designated for *Philonthus aeruginosus* Nordmann 1837, *P. aluticollis* Bernhauer 1921, *P. apicipennis* Lynch-Arribálzaga 1884, *P. convexicollis* Lynch-Arribálzaga 1884, *P. figulus* Erichson 1840, *P. flavicoxis* Bernhauer 1912, *P. jenseni* Bernhauer 1912, *P. pallipes* Blanchard 1842, *P. rubromaculatus* Blanchard 1842, *P. stenocephalus* Scheerpeltz 1972, *P. tucumanensis* Bernhauer 1934 and *P. weiserianus* Bernhauer, 1921.

Key words: Staphylininae, Philonthina, *Philonthus*, *Belonuchus*, taxonomy, South America, distribution

Introduction

General. The cosmopolitan genus *Philonthus* Stephens, with about 1250 species currently cited (Herman 2001b; Newton & Thayer 2005), is the second largest genus within Staphylinidae and the largest within the subtribe Philonthina. According to Herman (2001b) and Newton and Thayer (2005), 27 genera of Philonthina are known to occur in America south of Mexico with a total of 451 species recorded. Among these, *Philonthus* species represent almost one half of the total, with an estimated 198 species.

Most recent revisionary studies on *Philonthus* (Coiffait 1974; Smetana 1995; Schillhammer 1997, 1998, 1999 a, b, 2000 a, b, c, 2001 a, b, 2002, 2003 a, b) provide a comprehensive basis for a modern taxonomical study of the genus, but they do not deal with any aspect of the South American fauna, with exception of those species also occurring in America south of Mexico (only 5 % of the estimated total of *Philonthus* species for this area). The large number of taxa to be studied has made difficult to achieve not only a modern classification of the genus at a worldwide level but even modern revisions at more restricted geographical levels. Concerning South America, the genus is poorly known. The superficial similarity of the species and the scarcity of reliably identified material in local collections have made it almost impossible to recognize the local diversity. The only available modern papers on the taxonomy of South American *Philonthus* species are those of Coiffait and Sáiz (1968), Sáiz (1971), and more recently Chani-Posse (2004, 2006a) and Chani-Posse de Maus (2009). Although these papers contributed to the knowledge of the genus in southern South America, they are highly restricted to particular areas and/or topics and are insufficient for identifications at species-level on a broader scale.

According to Chani-Posse de Maus (2009), 27 species of *Philonthus* are currently known in southern South America. Among these, nine species are known only from Argentina and two from Argentina and Uruguay. Among the remaining 16 species, seven have a broad distribution in the Neotropical region, four are widespread in the New World, and the other five species are currently considered cosmopolitan. Most of these species were not revised after their original descriptions.

The objectives of this study are to revise the southern South American species of *Philonthus* by incorporating new characters from external morphology and genitalia, to provide bionomic information, and to detail their geographic distribution.