



Synopsis of *Aenictus* species groups and revision of the *A. currax* and *A. laeviceps* groups in the eastern Oriental, Indo-Australian, and Australasian regions (Hymenoptera: Formicidae: Aenictinae)

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Abstract

Twelve species groups are established in the ant genus *Aenictus* of the eastern part of Oriental region, and Indo-Australian and Australasian regions, and the species of the *Aenictus currax* group and *A. laeviceps* group are revised. Nine species (six named and three new species) of the *A. currax* group occurring in this area are: *A. cornutus* Forel, *A. currax* Emery, *A. diclops* Shattuck, *A. glabrinotum* Jaitrong et Yamane, **sp. nov.**, *A. gracilis* Emery, *A. huonicus* Wilson, *A. parahuonicus* Jaitrong et Yamane, **sp. nov.**, *A. pfeifferi* Zettel et Sorger, and *A. wayani* Jaitrong et Yamane, **sp. nov.** Thirteen species (six named and seven new species) are recognized in the *A. laeviceps* group: *A. alticola* Wheeler et Chapman, *A. binghami* Forel, *A. bodongjaya* Jaitrong et Yamane, **sp. nov.**, *A. breviceps* Forel, **stat. nov.**, *A. brevinodus* Jaitrong et Yamane, **sp. nov.**, *A. fulvus* Jaitrong et Yamane, **sp. nov.**, *A. hodgsoni* Forel, *A. laeviceps* (F. Smith), *A. luzoni* Wheeler et Chapman, *A. montivagus* Jaitrong et Yamane, **sp. nov.**, *A. rotundicollis* Jaitrong et Yamane, **sp. nov.**, *A. siamensis* Jaitrong et Yamane, **sp. nov.**, and *A. sonchaengi* Jaitrong et Yamane, **sp. nov.** *A. fergusonii* var. *breviceps* Forel is removed from synonymy with *A. laeviceps* and raised to full species. Lectotypes and paralectotypes are designated for *A. alticola*, *A. binghami*, *A. breviceps*, *A. cornutus*, *A. currax*, *A. gracilis*, *A. laeviceps*, and *A. luzoni*.

Key words: Army ants, taxonomy, new species, Southeast Asia, New Guinea, Australia

Introduction

The genus *Aenictus* Shuckard, 1840 (subfamily Aenictinae) is one of the larger ant genera of the world. Currently 164 valid species and subspecies are listed (Jaitrong & Eguchi, 2010; Bolton, 2011). They are distributed throughout the Old World tropics and subtropics, from Africa through the Middle East (including Arabian Peninsula, Armenia, Turkey, Rhodes Is., Iran and Afghanistan), India, South China, the southernmost part of Japan, various countries in Southeast Asia, to New Guinea and Australia (Arnol'di 1968; Bolton 1994; Gotwald 1995; Aktaç *et al.* 2004; Radchenko & Alipanah 2004; Shattuck 2008; Jaitrong & Yamane 2010). The members of this army ant genus conduct raids using large numbers of workers, mainly attacking other ant genera and more rarely other insects (Gotwald 1976; Gotwald 1995; Hirosawa *et al.* 2000; Shattuck 2008).

Several ant taxonomists have published papers on the *Aenictus* species from Southeast Asia and adjacent areas. The recent papers dealing with species from this region include: Wilson (1964) (Asia and Australia), Terayama (1984) (Taiwan), Xu (1994), Tang *et al.* (1995), Zhou and Chen (1999), Zhou (2001) (China), Terayama and Yamane (1989) (Sumatra, Indonesia), Terayama and Kubota (1993) (Vietnam and Thailand), Yamane and Hashimoto (1999) (Borneo), Shattuck (2008) (Australia), Jaitrong and Eguchi (2010) (Thailand), Jaitrong and Nur-Zati (2010) (Malay Peninsula), Jaitrong and Yamane (2010) (Southeast Asia), Jaitrong *et al.* (2010) (Oriental and Indo-Australian regions), Zettel and Sorger (2010) (Philippines and Borneo), and Jaitrong *et al.* (2011) (Laos). However, only a few have discussed the species groups of *Aenictus*. The first paper evaluating the species groups is Wilson (1964), in which he divided the members of the genus into 7 distinct groups based on certain hypothesized “unique, unreversed” characters. Jaitrong and Yamane (2010) established the *A. silvestrii* group to include three Southeast Asian species with less than 10 antennal segments, and Jaitrong *et al.* (2010) treated seven Oriental and Indo-Australian species which have yellowish and slender bodies with long legs and antennae as belonging to the *A. wrough-tonii* group.

In the present paper we establish species groups of *Aenictus*, using the materials collected from Southeast Asia, New Guinea and Australia, which are well defined on the basis of worker morphology. Indian and Sri Lankan species are not treated, but all the species known there belong to these species groups. A key to species groups is provided, and two species groups, the *A. currax* group and *A. laeviceps* group, are revised. Ten species are described as new. We omit the male-based names from the species treatment in this paper, following Wilson (1964).