



***Plectrosternus* Lacordaire, 1857 (Coleoptera: Elateridae); genus new to northern Western Ghats, India with a description of one new species**

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Abstract

A new species *Plectrosternus foveatus* sp.nov. is described and illustrated. This is the first record of the genus from northern Western Ghats (Type locality: Yeoor, Thane, Maharashtra, India) and the third species from India.

Key words: Taxonomy, Elateridae, Denticollinae, Maharashtra State, India, foveae

Introduction

Western Ghats runs parallel to the west coast of India from the Northern tip of Maharashtra up to the tip of the peninsula in the south. Western Ghats is a biodiversity hotspot with a high percentage of endemism. The elaterid diversity of the region is very high and not thoroughly studied.

The genus *Plectrosternus* Lacordaire appears to be a monobasic genus reported only from the Indian sub-region and from the Indochinese sub-region. Latreille (1834) described it under *Oxysternus* based on one species *O. rufus* and placed it in the Cebriionidae. Lacordaire (1857) transferred it to Elateridae and erected a new genus *Plectrosternus*. The species was reported from Assam, India. Many specimens of this species collected in Assam and in Sikkim, India, are preserved in the France National Museum, Paris. Candeze (1864) described the genus and species in detail. Subsequently *P. rufus* was designated as the type species by Hyslop (1921). Schwarz (1907) placed *Plectrosternus* in Tribus Lepturoidini based on six visible abdominal sternites. Actually there are only five visible sternites. There is no mention of six sternites by Candeze (1863), Vats (1991) and Calder (1996). Calder (1996) reported the presence of a distinct chin piece for Denticollinae. Vats (1991) reported the absence of a chin piece. We report the presence of an indistinct chin piece that is marked by a distinct black color which is different than the ochreous prosternum. Vats (1991) stated that the frons lacks the frontal carina. However the frons is definitely carinate over the antennal insertions as aptly stated by Calder (1996). Calder (1996) did not mention an acuminate metasternum between the mesocoxae. On the contrary Vats (1991) and Candeze (1857) start the key to the subfamilies and tribes respectively based on an acuminate metasternum.

It is known that part of Latreille's collection was acquired by Janson (Hayek, 1973). It is probable that the type *P. rufus* was in Latreille's possession which was then passed on to Candeze via Lacordaire. This appears true by the label-data on one of the specimen in BMNH. This label possesses 'Janson Coll. ex Candeze 1903.130'. Part of Candeze's collection was acquired by Janson which was passed on to Dr. F.D. Goodman who donated it to BMNH (Hayek, 1973). Hence it can be safely assumed that the specimen is a 'Type' which travelled from Latreille to Janson via Lacordaire and Candeze.

One specimen of *P. rufus* is preserved at the Pusa Museum, New Delhi. The label bears a date "5. VII. 1917" with a type locality as "Sidapur". The exact geographical locality of this specimen is unknown. There are five specimens of *P. rufus* in the museum of Bombay Natural History Society out of which two specimens are from 'Kanara' district of North Karnataka collected by T.R. Bell. There is no label data on exact date and place of col-