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A new *Aphanisticus* from Taiwan

(Insecta: Coleoptera: Buprestidae)

Abstract

A new species of *Aphanisticus* Latreille (Coleoptera, Buprestidae) from South Taiwan, Pingtung County, is described: *A. kuntai* sp. nov.

Key words. Oriental Region; Aphanisticini tribe; taxonomy; new species; host plants; ecological records.

Riassunto

[Un nuovo *Aphanisticus* di Taiwan]

È descritta una nuova specie di *Aphanisticus* Latreille (Coleoptera, Buprestidae) trovata nel sud dell'isola di Taiwan, nella contea di Pingtung: *A. kuntai* n. sp.

Introduction

Entomological research on xylophagous insects conducted in recent years in a constant and detailed manner has brought considerable progress regarding the knowledge of the Buprestidae family. The majority of the contributions regarding Buprestid fauna are well summarized in the two volumes published respectively by ONG & HATTORI (2019) and by ONG, CURLETTI & HATTORI (2023). After these contributions, the investigations had been continued, aimed at broadening also the knowledge of poephagous species. Thanks to these investigative activities, a population of *Aphanisticus* was found in the mountains of the south of the island, with a tropical climate, which turned out to belong to a new species linked to the Cyperaceae present in the habitats of the slopes, less sunny and more humid. Thanks to this discovery, the *Aphanisticus* reported for Taiwan amount to 5 species. The other species previously known for Taiwan are *A. anniae* Obenberger 1932, *A. antennatus* E. Saunders 1873, *A. fossidiscus* Obenberger 1944, *A. peninsulae* Obenberger, 1924.

Materials and methods

The species was found on plants in the lower parts of a forest path and was collected by hand. The specimens were prepared dried, and glued on cards by using common syndetic for further study, description and conservation. The pictures for the macro photography of specimens, have been taken with a Canon 80D and MP-E 65 mm macro lens combination. The Cognisys Stackshot automated macro rail is used for taking photos of different depths and then importing them into the Helicon Focus software for focus stacking. For even smaller objects like aedeagus, a combination of Mitutoyo 10x M Plan APO objective with extension tubes connecting with the camera body has been used. The stacked photos were finally edited in Adobe Photoshop v.23.3.2. Figures have bodies scale 1.0 mm; aedeagi with scale 0.5 mm.

ACRONYMS. NMNST: National Museum of Natural Science, Taichung, Taiwan; UOTT: coll. Uitsiann Ong, Tainan, Taiwan; GCCI: coll. Curletti, Museo Civico di Storia Naturale, Carmagnola, Italy.

Faunistic

Aphanisticus kuntai sp. nov. (Figs 1, 2, 3)

Material examined.

Holotype ♂: Taiwan, Pingtung, Dahanshan, 22°24'28"N 120°45'22"E, 6.VIII.2017, Kunta Ho leg. (NMNST).

Paratypes: 7♂♂, idem, 19.VI.2019, Uitsiann Ong leg.; 2♀♀, idem, 16.IV.2020, Uitsiann Ong leg. (UOTT, GCCI).

Holotype description

Length 4.4mm. Moderately elongated body, length/width ratio 3.42. Dorsal body back. Brilliant bronzed color, with silky reflection. Head dotted with deep foveolae arranged regularly, except in the interocular depression, where they are smaller, sparse and irregular. Vertex with median depression not reaching the margin of the pronotum. Eyes oblong, curved, but not kidney-shaped, narrower above. Oculofrontal margins keel-shaped. Genae broad, wider than the smaller diameter of the eyes. Clypeus vaguely cord-shaped. Antennae with antennomeres 1 and 2 large and globose, 3-8 elongated, slightly club-shaped, progressively larger distally, 9-11 large, flattened, expanded, leafed. Pronotum wider than long, less wide than the elytra measured in their maximum width located at the distal $\frac{3}{4}$, wider in the anterior median part, with tight margins, rounded anteriorly, straight and oblique posteriorly, forming obtuse posterior angles. Disc depressed on the sides and anteriorly, with two large transverse humps in the median part. Prosternal plate large, convex, slightly dilated distally. Scutellum small, almost invisible, shaped like an inverted isosceles triangle. Elytra glabrous, sinuous, wider in the

distal 2/3. Apices separately rounded with microdenticulation visible only with strong magnification. Two median carinae are visible on the disc which, starting from the humeral callus, reach up to half the length. Ventral side with glabrous ventrites, except for the last one which has a few scattered and short white setae. Apical margin rounded. Small, irregularly arranged, oblong, drop-shaped plates are visible on all ventrites and on the episternum. Simple, symmetrical claws. Aedeagus 1.0mm in length, slightly sclerified, diaphanous; parameres rounded dilated, median lobe acuminate.

Paratypes description

Length from 3.7 to 4.7 mm. No substantial differences are visible with to the holotype. Only one specimen has the elytral apices more sinuous on the sides, probably due to a malformation. Sexual dimorphism absent.

Etymology

The species is dedicated to the friend Kunta Ho who deserves credit for having found the first specimens.

Host Plant: The adults and larvae feed on the leaves of *Carex* sp.

Comparative notes

Regarding the fauna of Taiwan, *Aphanisticus kuntai* n. sp. in shape and size is similar to *A. fossidiscus* Obenberger, 1944 from which it is immediately distinguished by its completely glabrous elytra. The aedeagus resembles that of *A. kolibaci* Kalashian 1999, a described species from Thailand. This last species is easily differentiated by the pointed elytral tips and the pronotum more rounded and wider in the median part.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the obstetrician and gynecologist from Tainan, Dr. Kunta Ho who wanted to let us participate in the discovery, providing useful information for rediscovering the species and giving us the first specimens he found, allowing our study. Many thanks also to Dash Huang for the photo of the living specimen.

References

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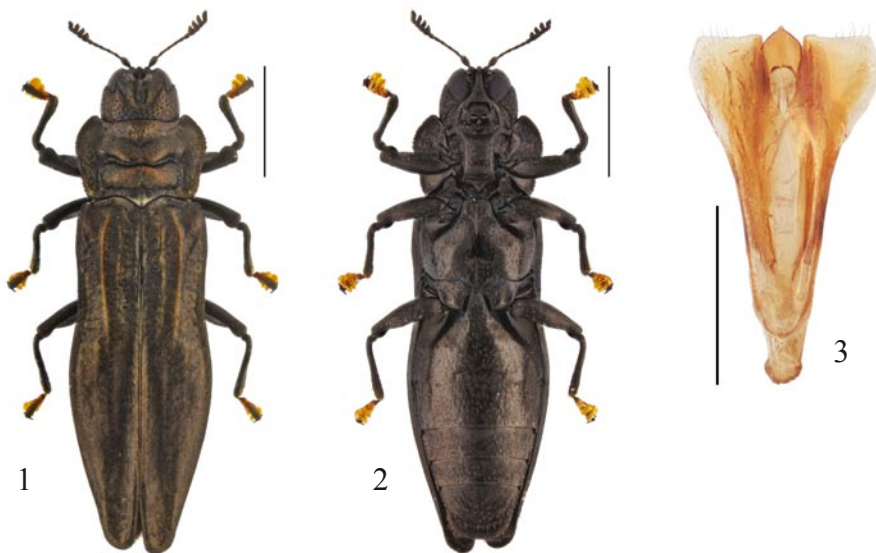


Fig. 1. *Aphanisticus kuntai* n. sp., Holotypus, dorsal view.

Fig. 2. *Aphanisticus kuntai* n. sp., Holotypus, ventral view.

Fig. 3. *Aphanisticus kuntai* n. sp., aedeagus.

Fig. 4. *Aphanisticus kuntai* n. sp. in nature, Dahanshan. Courtesy Dash Huang.



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