



A new endemic scorpion species from the Somuncura Plateau, in northern Patagonia (Scorpiones, Bothriuridae)

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Abstract

A new scorpion species from Argentina, *Bothriurus ceii* n. sp., is described. This species belongs to the *patagonicus* group, which includes *Bothriurus patagonicus* Maury 1969 and several undescribed species from Patagonia. *Bothriurus ceii* n. sp. is endemic to the upper level of the Somuncura plateau, which shows characteristics of the Patagonic phytogeographic province, whereas the surrounding area belongs to the Monte phytogeographic province. *Bothriurus ceii* n. sp. can be distinguished from the rest of the species of the *patagonicus* group because it lacks the VSM and VL carinae of sternite V and metasomal segment I, which are present in the rest of the species of the group.

Key words: Scorpiones, Patagonia, Argentina, Somuncura, *Bothriurus*

Introduction

Only two species of genus *Bothriurus* Peters 1861 have been described from Argentinean Patagonia: *Bothriurus burmeisteri* Kraepelin 1894, belonging to the *burmeisteri* group, which is widely distributed from central Argentina to southern Patagonia, and *Bothriurus patagonicus* Maury 1969, from north-western Patagonia; however, several undescribed species, related with *B. patagonicus* occur in western and southern Patagonia (Maury 1969; Ojanguren-Affilastro 2005; Mattoni, in press). These species are included in the *patagonicus* group; the distinctive characteristics of this group are as follows: hemispermatophore with the distal lamina slightly curved, and the lobe region poorly developed, VM and VSM carinae of metasomal segment V occupying the posterior half of the segment, movable finger of chelicerae with one subdistal tooth, and *Esb* trichobothria of the pedipalp chela forming a triangle with *Eb1* and *Eb2*. The distribution of the *patagonicus* group matches almost exactly with the Patagonic Phytogeographic province defined by Cabrera and Willink (1980), except for the species described in this contribution. *Bothriurus ceii* n. sp. inhabits far from this phytogeographic province, in the Somuncura plateau, a basaltic tableland, isolated in an extended plain in north-eastern Argentinean Patagonia. The average altitude of the plateau is about 900 to 1400 m, with some internal hills reaching up to 2000 m. The area that surrounds this tableland belongs to the Monte phytogeographic province; however, the upper level of this formation (above 900 m), shows ecological characteristics of the Patagonic phytogeographic province. The closest area that belongs to this phytogeographic province is placed almost 300 km western from this plateau. The isolation of this habitat has favoured the presence of several endemic species and subspecies of animals, as lizards, amphibians and even a fish species (Ceï 1969, 1986; Menni 2004). The scorpion fauna of this area is closely related with that of the Patagonic scorpological area defined by Acosta & Maury (1998). Up to now only two species have been collected there, *Urophonius somuncura* Acosta 2003, which is an endemism of the upper level of this plateau (Acosta 2003), closely