



A revision of the new world stiletto fly genus *Ataenogera* Kröber (Diptera: Therevidae: Phycinae) with the description of two new species

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Abstract

The New World genus *Ataenogera* Kröber is revised with all species illustrated and distribution maps provided along with a key to species. *Ataenogera* includes six species, two of which (*Ataenogera argentifrons* sp. nov. and *A. irwini* sp. nov.) are new to science. *Ataenogera brevicornis* (Bromley) is resurrected from synonymy with *A. abdominalis* Kröber and is considered a discrete species.

Key words: Stiletto flies, new species, key, morphology, Nearctic, Neotropical

Introduction

Stiletto flies (Therevidae) are found on all continents, except Antarctica and have their highest species diversity in arid areas with a Mediterranean climate. While the larvae are fossorial predators of soft bodied arthropods in loose soil, the adults only imbibe water and are rarely found on flowers, although several species seem to feed on pollen which accumulates on the veins of leaves.

The subfamily Phycinae is distributed worldwide (with the exception of Australia and Antarctica) and comprises 14 genera with over 130 described and undescribed species. The highest diversity is found in Africa, and the southern Palaearctic region, especially in the arid, semi-desert habitats. The Phycinae currently includes the genera *Acathrito* Lyneborg, *Actorthia* Kröber, *Araeopus* Lyneborg, *Ataenogera* Kröber, *Efflatouniella* Kröber, *Neotabuda* Kröber, *Orthactia* Kröber, *Parapherocera* Irwin, *Pherocera* Cole, *Phycus* Walker, *Ruppellia* Wiedemann, *Salentia* Costa, *Schlingeria* Irwin, and *Stenogephyra* Lyneborg.

Ataenogera is the only Phycinae genus that is endemic to the Neotropical region, while species of the genera *Phycus* and *Pherocera* are also found in the northern part of the Neotropical region, their highest diversity is in Africa and the Nearctic Region, respectively. The other two New World Phycinae genera *Schlingeria* and *Parapherocera* are endemic to the Nearctic region. *Ataenogera* resembles *Phycus*; characters to separate both genera are listed in the diagnosis.

Kröber (1914:31) erected the genus *Ataenogera* with *A. abdominalis* from Paraguay (South America) as the type species by monotypy. In 1928, Kröber (1928:117) described the genus *Leptocera* with *L. gracilis* Kröber as the type species by monotypy. In 1929, Kröber (1929a:434) determined that *Leptocera* was preoccupied (Olivier 1813:489) and proposed the new name *Ziehenia* Kröber for *Leptocera*. Apparently without knowledge of Kröber's new name for *Leptocera*, Richards (1929:171) proposed the new name *Epileptocera* for *Leptocera*. Webb and Irwin (1989) revised *Ataenogera* Kröber and synonymized *Leptocera gracilis*