



New genus of Megalopsalidinae (Arachnida: Opiliones: Monoscutidae) from north-eastern Australia

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Abstract

Neopantopsalis **n. gen.** represents a previously unrecognised radiation of Opiliones from Queensland and northern New South Wales. *Neopantopsalis quasimodo* **n. sp.** is described from specimens examined but never published by the late G. S. Hunt. *N. pentheter* **n. sp.**, *N. psile* **n. sp.** and *N. thaumatopoiios* **n. sp.** are also described, while *Pantopsalis continentalis* and *Spinicrus camelus* are recombined as *N. continentalis* **n. comb.** and *N. camelus* **n. comb.**, respectively. *Neopantopsalis* is distinguished from other genera of Monoscutidae by humps on the dorsal prosomal plate, lengthened spine rows on leg I, reduced bristle groups on the penis, and a long, dorsoventrally flattened glans. Male dimorphism is postulated for *N. quasimodo*, *N. pentheter* and *N. psile*, with rarer minor males that are considerably smaller and have less developed secondary sexual characteristics than the more common major males. A new terminology is introduced to facilitate descriptions of the propeltidium of Megalopsalidinae.

Key words: *Neopantopsalis*, *Spinicrus*, Phalangioidea, male dimorphism

Introduction

The late Glenn Hunt was the most recent significant worker on Australian Opiliones, and described and revised a number of species of Laniatores (Hunt 1971, 1972, 1985, 1990a, 1992, 1993, 1995; Hunt & Hickman 1993). Hunt also worked on Australian Eupnoi, and was one of the original describers of the neopilionid subfamily Ballarrinae (Hunt & Cokendolpher 1991). However, only preliminary work (Hunt 1990b) was published on Australian long-legged harvestmen (Eupnoi) before his untimely death in 1999. Gray (2001) gives a complete bibliography of Hunt's publications.

While sorting through the collection of Monoscutidae held by the Queensland Museum in Brisbane, I (C. Taylor) found a specimen that had been designated by Glenn Hunt as holotype of a new genus and species. Illustrations of this species were also found among Glenn's unpublished notes held in the archives of the Australian Museum in Sydney. Further studies established that the new species was part of a noteworthy radiation of species in Queensland and New South Wales. Two of these species, *Pantopsalis continentalis* Roewer 1923 and *Spinicrus camelus* Forster 1949, had been described previously, while the remaining species were new. Glenn's new species is therefore presented herein, along with descriptions and redescriptions of further species of his new genus. I also present a new set of descriptive terminology for the megalopsalidine prosoma.

Harvestmen of the suborder Eupnoi are widespread in Australia, but remain little studied, with a probable high proportion of undescribed species (Hunt 1990b, 1991; Hunt & Cokendolpher 1991). They were first described from Australia by Sørensen (1886) who established *Macropsalis* Sørensen 1886 from Sydney in New South Wales (later renamed *Megalopsalis* Roewer 1923 due to preoccupation by a bird genus,