



***Rondostreptus*, a new spirostreptid genus from southeastern Tanzania (Diplopoda: Spirostreptidae)**

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Abstract

The name *Rondostreptus kiellandi* is proposed for an undescribed genus and species of Spirostreptidae apparently endemic to the Rondo Plateau in southeastern Tanzania. It appears to have no close relatives among the known spirostreptid fauna of East Africa.

Key words: *Rondostreptus*, new species, Spirostreptidae, Diplopoda, Tanzania

Introduction

The Rondo Plateau is an elevated region west of Lindi, in the coastal plain of southeastern Tanzania. With an estimated area of about 500 square miles above 1500 feet, and a maximum elevation of 2900 feet ASL (885 m), this landmass is a physiographic feature of potential biogeographic interest. It is one of the last parts of Tanzania to be investigated in terms of local biota, but one regrettably not neglected by commercial interests engaged in removal of the native forest during the past 150 years.

Present knowledge of the Rondonian diplopod fauna is limited to several small collections made in 1986 and 1987 by the lamented Jan Kielland, who preserved these animals incidental to his primary interest in butterfly collecting. Only two species—both oxydesmid polydesmidans—have been formally documented from this material so far. One is the widespread coastal species *Orodesminus m. macrolophus* (Attems), the other is *Gonepacre muhulu* Hoffman, otherwise known only from the Muhulu Forest, some 300 kilometers northeast of Rondo. This species is noteworthy because the genus to which it belongs is otherwise endemic to the Udzungwe Mountains.

In the following pages I add an additional element to the regional fauna, a somewhat disjunct species of Spirostreptidae which is not compatible with any of the established African genera of the family. The recognition of an endemic genus lends credence to the premise that the Rondo Plateau merits serious consideration as a biological “hotspot” in coastal East Africa.

Gonopod terminology

In my recent (2008) survey of the spirostreptid genus *Limnostreptus*, I ventured to propose some new names, derived from classical sources, to denote anatomical features of the gonopods previously indicated by vernacular names in several modern languages. I take this occasion to introduce several additional terms to extend this concern for descriptive precision.

Arculus (“little arch or curvature”). This name is proposed to replace the German word *Knie* for the region of the gonopod telopodite that is recurved proximad as it emerges from the gonocoel. Knee is better reserved for the flexible articulation between two bones in legs of terrestrial vertebrates.

Mesosternum. This name is proposed to denominate only the medial triangular or transverse sclerite at the anterior base of the gonopod proplica, previously referred to as the sternum or sternite.