A new species of *Brethesiella* (Hymenoptera: Encyrtidae) from California, USA, a parasitoid of *Steatococcus tabernicolus* (Hemiptera: Margarodidae)

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Abstract

A new species of the encyrtid wasp genus *Brethesiella* Porter, 1920 is described from the Mojave Desert in California, USA. The type series of *B. mojave* **sp. n.** was reared from the margarodid scale *Steatococcus tabernicolus* Ferris on creosote bush, *Larrea tridentata*. The genus *Aztecencyrtus* Timberlake, 1926 is synonymized under *Brethesiella* and its two described species are transferred to the latter as *B. flava* (Timberlake, 1926) **comb. n.** and *B. iceryae* (Howard, 1892) **comb. n.** A brief review of the encyrtid parasitoids of Margarodidae, a diagnosis of *Brethesiella*, and an annotated key to its six described species with known females in the New World are provided.

Key words: Encyrtidae, *Brethesiella*, taxonomy, *Steatococcus tabernicolus,* parasitoid, California

Introduction

In 2001, the junior author of this communication found in the collection of the Entomology Research Museum, Department of Entomology, University of California, Riverside, a series of specimens of an encyrtid (Hymenoptera: Encyrtidae), reared in 1936 by T. R. Platt from a very large scale, *Steatococcus tabernicolus* Ferris. The parasitized host, which belongs to the tribe Iceryini of the scale family Margarodidae (Hemiptera), was collected on creosote bush, *Larrea tridentata*, in the Mojave Desert, California, USA. The parasitoid was first determined as belonging to the genus *Brethesiella* Porter by the late John W. Beardsley, whose identification was recently confirmed by John S. Noyes. We agreed with their generic identifications and also came to the conclusion that it belongs