



## Assassin bugs (Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Reduviidae) of Uruguay: A synoptic catalogue as a contribution to the study of Austral biodiversity

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### Abstract

The first synoptic catalogue of Reduviidae is given to Uruguay including nine subfamilies, Ectrichodiinae (4), Emesinae (1), Hammacerinae (1), Harpactorinae (11), Peiratinae (4), Phymatinae (3), Reduviinae (5), Stenopodainae (7), Triatominae (9), being Harpactorinae and Triatominae the best represented by eleven and nine species respectively. *Criceptopareis tucumana* (Berg) is mentioned for the first time for Uruguay and is confirmed the distribution for *Atrachelus cinereus* (Fabricius), *Melanolestes argentinus* Berg, *Rasahus hamatus* (Fabricius), *Zelurus femoralis femoralis* (Stål), *Diaditus semicolon* Stål, *Triatoma infestans* (Klug) and *Triatoma rubrovaria* (Blanchard) from the material belonging to the Museo de La Plata (Argentina). This information is of valuable for insect's conservation biodiversity programs.

**Keywords:** Reduviidae, Heteroptera, Uruguay, Synonymies, Distribution

### Introduction

Reduviidae is one of the five largest families of Heteroptera, comprising about 981 genera and more than 6878 species, with most occurring in the tropics (Henry 2009). Reduviids take place in all biogeographical regions (Schuh & Slater 1995). They are voracious predators of insects and arthropods (Ambrose 2006); nevertheless some like Triatominae species are hematophagous and important vector of Chagas Disease (Coscarón 2002). However, studies on abundance, taxonomic richness, geographic, ecological, trophic, morphological, biological, behavioral diversity and biocontrol potential of reduviids are meager; hence, conservation of assassin bugs can be achieved only if their biosystematics and bioecology are understood thoroughly (Ambrose 2006).

Neotropical inventories have been done for Argentina (Coscarón 1998); Costa Rica (Coscarón & Jirón 1988), Chile (Prado 2008), Ecuador (Froeschner 1981) Galápagos (Froeschner 1985), Mexico (Coscarón, 2002) and Panamá (Froeschner 1999). We provide for the first time, an inventory of Uruguayan Reduviidae with the associated synonymy when taxa from Uruguay were mentioned; this includes a total of 46 species. The classification follows Maldonado (1990) and Putshkov and Putshkov (1985–1989). Concerning biogeography, Uruguay is included in the Pampa Province according to Morrone (2001); characterized by savannas, with grass that can reach 1 m high, herbs and shrubs, similar to xeric forests of the province of Chaco, but impoverished, flooded savannas, and gallery forests along rivers (Cabrera & Willink 1973; Dinerstein *et al.* 1995). Some examples among the dominant plant species are *Acacia caven* and the predominant genus in savannas is *Aristida* L. The climate is warm-temperate, with rainfall throughout the year, ranging from 600 to 1200 mm annually; the average annual temperature ranges between 13 and 17 degrees (Cabrera & Willink 1973).

On other hand, the current global biodiversity crisis, systematic and biogeography knowledge are essential to conservation priorities (Fitzpatrick *et al.* 2007). In many cases, arthropods could be used for conservation monitoring (Halffter & Favila 1993; Kremen 1994) making catalogs and faunistic inventories useful tools for bioconservation purposes, especially the Austral fauna.