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Ditriaena romeroi sp. nov. (Coleoptera: Buprestidae), a new species from northwestern Venezuela

MICHAEL HORNBURG[1] & STEPHAN GOTTWALD[2]

[1] *Kavalierstraße 11, 13187 Berlin, Germany; e-mail: mihornburg@t-online.de*

[2] *Jasminweg 10, 14052 Berlin, Germany; e-mail: s_gottwald@compuserve.com*

Abstract

Ditriaena (Ditriaena) romeroi **sp. nov.**, from the state of Falcón in northwestern Venezuela, is described, illustrated and compared with related species. Additional distributional and biological data of other Buprestidae species, collected at the type locality, are given.

Resumen

Se describe *Ditriaena (Ditriaena) romeroi* **sp. nov.** del estado Falcón en el noroeste de Venezuela. La especie se ilustra y se compara con especies afines. Además se dan datos adicionales de distribución y biología de otras especies bupréstidos coleccionados en la localidad típica.

Keywords: Taxonomy, Coleoptera, Buprestidae, *Ditriaena*, new species, Venezuela

Introduction

Over the course of several research trips to Venezuela between 2001 and 2008, a considerable number of Buprestidae specimens have been collected. In addition to the fieldwork, certain institutional and private collections were visited to compile further data to improve our knowledge of the country's buprestid fauna. A first rough estimation of number of species was given in Hornburg & Gottwald (2008).

The main focus of the most recent collections in 2008 was a hill-like formation in the coastal plains of northern Venezuela, which turned out to be of particular interest concerning its relatively rich species spectrum. This site, Cerro Togogo (Fig. 4), is located 3.5 km northwest of the village Maicillal and belongs to a group of largely eroded geological formations in the Agua Salada Subbasin in the northeast of Falcón. The surrounding lowlands are characterized by extensive dry forests, which are heavily influenced by human exploitation and primarily used as grazing land for goats. The landscape is characterized by medium-tall trees and shrubs (e.g. *Prosopis* sp.), predominantly belonging to the family Fabaceae. Moreover, this thorny woodland (Espinales) is interspersed by various types of succulent plants. Other main influential factors are the extremely low precipitation in conjunction with the low water storage capacity of the sandy soil and the gathering of firewood by the local rural population. Rainfall concentrates within the period of November until January and varies between 125 mm and 800 mm annually (Soriano & Ruiz 2003). All these circumstances effect a fast progressing erosion, which is easily noticeable virtually everywhere. Due to the topographic characteristics and the therefore less intensive agronomical usage, the Cerro Togogo seems to be only modestly affected by the destructive influences of civilization. Consequentially, a significantly more diverse natural vegetation remains preserved at this location. Notable in our collections is a new species of the genus *Ditriaena* Waterhouse, 1911 which is described below.

The genus *Ditriaena* was originally proposed by Waterhouse (1911) for *Sphenoptera purpurascens* Waterhouse, 1882, based among others on characters of the elytral apices. In his generic revision, Cobos (1975) transferred two additional taxa: *Buprestis sphericollis* Laporte & Gory, 1836 and *Cinyra sexspinosa* Waterhouse, 1889, and added a fourth, the new species *D. incerta*. Concurrently, Cobos (1975) introduced a new monotypic subgenus,

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