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## Revision and cladistic analysis of the Afrotropical endemic genus *Smeringopus* Simon, 1890 (Araneae: Pholcidae)

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This paper is dedicated to Prof. Otto Kraus



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**Revision and cladistic analysis of the Afrotropical endemic genus *Smeringopus* Simon, 1890 (Araneae: Pholcidae)**

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## Abstract

The genus *Smeringopus* Simon, 1890 is revised, with redescriptions of most previously known species and descriptions of 36 new species. With now 55 species, *Smeringopus* becomes the most species-rich pholcid genus in Africa. *Smeringopus* is largely restricted to central, southern, and eastern Africa, where it includes some of the largest and most conspicuous pholcid spiders in the region. A first cladistic analysis of *Smeringopus*, including outgroup representatives of all other genera of Smeringopinae, strongly suggests that the central and western African *Smeringopina* Kraus, 1957 is the sister taxon of *Smeringopus*. *Smeringopus* is here divided into twelve operational species groups, most of which are characterized by putative synapomorphies and by specific geographic distributions. Three species are newly synonymized with *S. pallidus* (Blackwall, 1858): *S. excavatus* (Simon, 1877); *S. pholcicus* Strand, 1907; and *S. buehleri* Schenkel, 1944. *Smeringopus madagascariensis* Millot, 1946 is newly synonymized with *S. carli* Lessert, 1915. *Crossopriza cylindrogaster* Simon, 1907 is transferred to *Smeringopus*. The following new species are described: *S. badplaas*; *S. blyde*; *S. bujongolo*; *S. butare*; *S. bwindi*; *S. chibububo*; *S. chogoria*; *S. dehoop*; *S. dundo*; *S. florisbad*; *S. hanglip*; *S. harare*; *S. isangi*; *S. kalomo*; *S. katanga*; *S. koppies*; *S. lotzi*; *S. lubondai*; *S. luki*; *S. lydenberg*; *S. mayombe*; *S. mgahinga*; *S. mlilwane*; *S. moxico*; *S. mpanga*; *S. ndumo*; *S. ngangao*; *S. oromia*; *S. principe*; *S. ruhiza*; *S. saruanle*; *S. sederberg*; *S. tombua*; *S. turkana*; *S. ubicki*; *S. uisib*.

**Key words:** Pholcidae, Smeringopinae, *Smeringopus*, Africa, Madagascar, cladistic analysis, taxonomy

## Introduction

Pholcids are among the dominant web-building spiders in tropical and subtropical regions around the world, occupying a wide variety of microhabitats from the leaf litter to tree canopies, and ranging from sea level to over 4000 m. The concentration of pholcid diversity in tropical and subtropical countries has long slowed and handicapped progress in understanding fundamental aspects of relationships, distribution patterns, and species-level diversity. Only recently has the situation started to change. After more than a decade of concentrated effort towards all taxonomic levels from species to subfamily, using both morphological and molecular tools and including new material from numerous focused expeditions, a stable phylogeny is finally beginning to emerge and rough estimates of actual distribution patterns and species-level diversity can be provided (Huber 2011a). Even though species numbers have doubled during the last 12 years, several genera continue to be very poorly known, with numerous species ‘described’ but unidentifiable with the existing literature and thus basically unknown. This is particularly true of *Smeringopus*, one of the most species rich pholcid genera in Africa that includes relatively large and conspicuous species but that has received essentially no taxonomic attention for over five decades.

While the type species of *Smeringopus*, the pantropical *S. pallidus*, is fairly well known, its many African cousins have remained very poorly studied. When Kraus (1957) published the only previous revision of the genus, only about 100 adult specimens (other than *S. pallidus*) were available to him, representing eight species. Several further nominal species were known at that time, but they were either not treated for lack of material or not even mentioned (e.g. *S. thomensis* Simon, 1907; *S. natalensis* Lawrence, 1947). Some species have never been illustrated (*S. affinitatus* Strand, 1906; *S. lineiventris* Simon, 1890; *S. pholcicus* Strand, 1907; *S. rubrotinctus* Strand, 1913; *S. thomensis*), and some were unidentifiable because of lost and/or juvenile type specimens (e.g. *S. affinitatus*; *S. arambourgi* Fage, 1936; *S. peregrinus* Strand, 1906; *S. zonatus* Strand, 1906), resulting in misidentification (e.g. in the case of *S. peregrinus* in Kraus 1957). Since then, intensive collecting in many African countries has increased the number of available specimens to over 3000, and in several cases it has become possible to reliably identify ‘old’ species even in problematic cases such as those with lost or juvenile types. However, not a single further species has been described since 1957 and with the exception of *S. pallidus* and *S. natalensis*, no taxonomic treatment nor even a single new record has been published. The present paper is intended to provide a long overdue update of Kraus’s revision. It gives an overview of the genus, redescribes as many as possible of the ‘old’ species, and describes a large part of the new species available in collections. With 55 species, *Smeringopus* becomes the most species rich pholcid genus in Africa (followed by *Pholcus* with 47 African species).

Together with seven other genera, *Smeringopus* constitutes the subfamily Smeringopinae which is geographically restricted to Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East (Huber 2011a). The monophyly of the group has previously been supported both by morphological and molecular data (reviewed in Huber 2011a), but