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Review of *Neuroleon* Navás of West Africa with descriptions of four new species (Neuroptera, Myrmeleontidae)

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Abstract

The *Neuroleon* species of sub-Saharan West Africa are reviewed. Eight species are recorded: *N. drosimus* Navás, *N. lapidarius* **nov. sp.**, *N. modestus* (Navás), *N. nubilatus* (Navás), *N. rapax* **nov. sp.**, *N. raptor* **nov. sp.**, *N. pardalice* (Banks), and *N. ruber* **nov. sp.** A ninth species, *N. nigericus* Navás, of which no specimens could be examined, is tentatively maintained in the genus *Neuroleon* pending examination of the type. Three new synonymies are established. Seven species are removed from the genus *Neuroleon*. *N. pardalice* is recorded from the region for the first time. The species are illustrated and keyed.

Key words: Antlion, Afrotropical Region, Myrmeleontinae, Nemoleontini

Introduction

This contribution to taxonomic knowledge of the antlions of West Africa deals with the genus *Neuroleon* Navás, 1909, which was described including the following species: *N. arenarius* (Navás, 1904) (a replacement name for *Myrmeleon variegatus* Rambur, 1842, *nec* Klug, 1839), *N. ochreatus* (Navás, 1904), *N. sticticus* (Navás, 1903) (= *N. egenus* (Navás, 1914a), a preoccupied name), and *N. distichus* (Navás, 1903), without designating a type species for the new genus. In the same publication, Navás maintained *Myrmeleon nemausiense* Borkhausen, 1791 in the genus *Myrmeleon* with the emendation *nemausiensis*. Then, Navás (1912) designated the latter species as type species of his genus *Nelees*, and later he designated *N. arenarius* as type species of *Neuroleon* (Navás 1914b).

Neuroleon is now the largest genus of the tribe Nemoleontini, with 123 valid species listed by Stange (2004), of which 86 were described by Navás. Among them, 69 are recorded from the Afrotropical Region and 43 from the Palearctic (mainly West Palearctic) Region. Only 14 species are known from the Oriental Region. No species are known from the western hemisphere or Australia.

No revisions have been conducted to date, so the systematics of the genus remains unresolved. Stange (2004) listed 12 genera as synonyms of *Neuroleon*. If synonymies are to be justified, and the placement of some genera or species is to be clarified, further investigation is required to provide a satisfactory knowledge of the systematics of the genus.

In this review, four previously described valid species and four new species are recognized from West Africa. A ninth species, *Neuroleon nigericus* Navás, 1935, is tentatively retained in the genus *Neuroleon*, pending examination of the type specimen. Three new synonymies are established. Seven species are removed from the genus *Neuroleon*.

Material and Methods

The region covered by this survey includes the West African countries south of the Sahara, from Senegal to Cameroon, including the Cape Verde Islands and excluding the desert region (Fig. 1).