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Revision of the ant genus *Myrmoteras* of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula (Hymenoptera: Formicidae: Formicinae)

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Abstract

The Indo-Chinese species of the genus *Myrmoteras* are revised. We recognise one species in the subgenus *Myagroteras* and six species in the subgenus *Myrmoteras* from Vietnam, Myanmar and Thailand. Five new species are described based on the worker caste: *M. concolor*, *M. jaitrongi*, *M. namphuong*, *M. opalinum*, and *M. tomimasai*, all belonging to the subgenus *Myrmoteras*.

Key words: *Myrmoteras*, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, new species

Introduction

The ant genus *Myrmoteras* Forel, 1893 is one of the formicine groups with the most bizarre form. They have an oddly-shaped head, huge eyes and extraordinarily long mandibles opening wider than has been observed for any other ant (Moffett, 1985). In the course of our ant diversity studies in Southeast Asia including Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, *Myrmoteras* are infrequently encountered and considered rare (Bui, 2000, 2002; Eguchi et al., 2003; Yamane et al., 2002, 2005). On the other hand, in some places like the Sang Le Forest Ecosystem of Pu Mat National Park, Nghe An, Vietnam (a forest dominated by *Lagerstroemia tomentosa* Presl.), colonies are often aggregated in certain small areas.

Myrmoteras is in the tribe Myrmoteratini Emery, 1895 (Bolton, 2003). Its geographical range is the Oriental region and the Austro-Malayan subregion of the Australian region (Moffett, 1985; Xu, 1998; Agosti, 1992; Zettel & Sorger, 2011). Creighton (1930) revised the genus for the first time, listing six species including two new species. Moffett (1985) recognised a total of 18 species including 10 new species in two morphologically distinct subgenera: *Myrmoteras* with seven species and the new subgenus *Myagroteras* with eleven species. Later Agosti (1992) revised the species in the Malay archipelago including the Malay peninsula south of the Kra isthmus, the Philippines, New Guinea, the Islands of New Britain and New Ireland, and added 13 new species. Xu (1998) described one new species from Yunnan province, southwestern China, and recently Zettel & Sorger (2011) revised the Philippine taxa, adding 2 new species, and gave a list of 34 valid species names from the whole range of the genus.

The ant fauna of the Indo-Chinese peninsula is poorly known (Bui & Eguchi 2003, Yamane et al. 2003, Eguchi et al. 2005). In the present paper the genus *Myrmoteras* in this region is reviewed, based on newly obtained material from Vietnam and Thailand. We propose five new species and present a key to the species from this region.