



<http://dx.doi.org/10.11646/zootaxa.3669.3.4>

<http://zoobank.org/urn:lsid:zoobank.org:pub:7901C3A1-771E-42C5-921C-5CD493AE748C>

Two new species of *Melanoplus* Stål, 1873 (Orthoptera: Acrididae: Melanoplinae) from northeastern Mexico

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Abstract

Two new species of the genus *Melanoplus* Stål 1873 are described. *M. trachodes* n. sp., and *M. parvus* n. sp., both of which are endemic to the cool-temperate mountains of the Eastern Sierra Madre (ESM) in northeastern Mexico. Their habitat represents a transition zone between the ESM and the semiarid High Plateau Biogeographic provinces. This transition zone is characterized by an elevation range from 1,900 to 3,400 m and unique ecological conditions, which give rise to a considerable number of endemisms.

Key words: Mexico, biodiversity, endemisms, *Melanoplus trachodes* n. sp., *M. parvus* n. sp.

Resumen

Se describen dos nuevas especies del género *Melanoplus* Stål 1873. *M. trachodes* n. sp., y *M. parvus* n. sp., ambos taxa son endémicos a las montañas frías templadas de la Sierra Madre Oriental (SMO) en el noreste de México. Su hábitat representa una zona de transición entre dos Provincias Biogeográficas, SMO y Altiplano árido mexicano. Esta zona de transición presenta un rango elevacional de 1,900 a 3,400 metros y condiciones ecológicas únicas, que dan lugar a un número considerable de endemismos.

Palabras clave: México, biodiversidad, endemismos, *Melanoplus trachodes* n. sp., *M. parvus* n. sp.

Introduction

Among the acridid grasshoppers, the Melanoplinae is one of the largest subfamilies with more than 900 species distributed throughout Eurasia and America (Chintauan-Marquier *et al.* 2010). The genus *Melanoplus* Stål, 1873 is comprised of more species than any of the other American melanoplinae with Eades *et al.* (OSF-2013) listing *ca.* 284 valid species. This genus is particularly diverse in México and Central America with numerous endemisms. At least 41 taxa are known from Mexico, with a good number of species described recently (Fontana & Buzzetti 2007, Buzzetti *et al.* 2010, Fontana *et al.* 2011). In recent expeditions to study the Orthoptera of northeastern Mexico, a few specimens of *Melanoplus* that could not be assigned to any of the known taxa were collected. We describe here two new species of *Melanoplus* from northeastern Mexico. These new taxa are associated with the *M. reflexus* group (Fontana & Buzzetti 2007) in one case, and, possibly, with the *M. puer* group (Scudder 1897, Blatchley 1920, Hubbell 1932, Capinera *et al.* 2001) in the other.

Materials and methods

Specimens were collected using a sweep net or by hand. The following resources were used in trying to identify the specimens: Scudder (1897), Blatchley (1920), Little (1931), Hubbell (1932), Hebard (1937), Gurney & Brooks