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A new species of the South East Asian genus *Sarax* Simon, 1892 (Arachnida: Amblypygi: Charinidae) and synonymization of *Sarax mediterraneus* Delle Cave, 1986

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Abstract

A new species of the whip spider genus *Sarax* Simon, 1892 from Cebu Island in the Philippines is described: *Sarax huberi* **sp. nov.** With the description of this species, the diversity of the genus is increased to three species in the Philippines. Some additional data on their natural environment and their specific habitat are presented and compared with sibling species. The synonymization of *Sarax mediterraneus* Delle Cave, 1986 with *Sarax buxtoni* (Gravely, 1915) is carried out.

Key words: Whip spider, *Sarax huberi* **sp. nov**., Philippines, biodiversity

Introduction

Whip spiders (Amblypygi) belong to the class Arachnida and are distributed globally. They are a very small group of arachnids with 190 currently known species (Harvey 2013; Armas et al. 2014; Seiter & Wolff 2014). They are nocturnal and cavernicolus predators, which are catching their prey with their raptorial pedipalps armed with numerous spines. Their first pair of legs is modified as sensory organs and extremely elongated. These are essential for hunting and mating, and bear important multisensory functions (Weygoldt 2000; Foelix & Hebets 2001). The body of whip spiders is flattened and cryptically colored. These animals further exhibit a unique sideward walking behavior. They show a ritualized courtship and indirect insemination via a stalked spermatophore (Weygoldt 2000).

The genus *Sarax* is restricted to South East Asia. A doubtful record from Greece is still listed in Harvey (2003, 2013): *Sarax mediterraneus* Delle Cave, 1986. However, this has been discussed as a case of confusion in the recent literature (Weygoldt 2005; Seiter & Wolff 2014). On the Philippines, only a few records of species of the genus *Sarax* are known. The type species of the genus, *Sarax brachydactylus* Simon, 1892 is known from Luzon-, Cebu- and Palawan Islands in the Philippines (Giupponi & Miranda 2012; Harvey 2013), and from Malaysia and Cambodia on the mainland (Harvey 2003, 2013). Today, only two species of the genus *Sarax* are described from the Philippines, the most recent amendment being made by Giupponi & Miranda (2012). They described *Sarax curioi* Giupponi & Miranda, 2012 from Malumpati, Panay Island.

Here, we describe a new species from Cebu Island. Additionally, we present new detailed records of *S. brachydactylus* on Luzon Island and for the first time present photographs of *S. curioi* and its environment. The doubtful record of *Sarax mediterraneus* Delle Cave, 1986 in Greece is briefly discussed and revised.

Material and methods

All *Sarax huberi* **sp. nov.** specimens were collected on Cebu Island (Moalboal), in the surrounding of the Busay cave and in Kawasan Falls, South of Moalboal from 2008 to 2014 by Siegfried Huber (Germany). They were found under stones and fallen leaves in front of the cave entrance, in a shady place protected by the vegetation from direct rain drops and the sun. In the laboratory, we reared the individuals in plastic terraria of different sizes using

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