

SYSTEMATICS OF THE ENDEMIC AUSTRALASIAN FAMILY MONOScutIDAE (OPILIONES)

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The Monoscutidae is a family of harvestmen that is widespread in Australia and New Zealand, but which has been little investigated taxonomically. As well as a large number of undescribed species, inconsistent application of non-significant characters has resulted in a generic framework for the family that is of doubtful applicability. A project is currently underway to revise the family and establish a more usable generic classification, one that will reflect actual phylogenetic relationships within the family.

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DIVERSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF AMAZONIAN OPILIONES: STATE OF KNOWLEDGE AND PERSPECTIVE

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The order Opiliones is highly diverse and abundant in the Tropical regions of the world. The Neotropics has approximately 60% of the diversity worldwide, however this is a fraction of the real diversity, especially in the South and Central America where several localities are under sampling or have never been sampled. Regarding the South American sites, the Amazon basin may be pointed as an extreme example of low knowledge. At least 70% of the total area of the basin remains unexplored, and from 50-90% of the material collected in the few explored localities is composed of new species. The lack of specialists is the main cause of our large ignorance of the Amazonian diversity. We have been searching for the positive identities of the groups distributed in Amazonian, mapping accurately their distributions by confirming both the records in the literature and the new ones, checking the taxonomic status of the specimens cited in the registers, providing, when possible, qualitative and quantitative sampling in localities never sampled before, and applying statistical treatment for modeling these data. Presently, 82 new sites have been sampled, and one of the ever most important inventory has been carried out along the Amazonas river, a transect of 3,200 km crossing the Brazilian Amazon. With the data from literature and the other sampled sites, we may now predict the distributions, endemic areas, and composition of species in this region.

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