

Revision of the ant genus
Myrmoteras of the Malay Archipelago
(Hymenoptera, Formicidae)

by

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With 42 figures

ABSTRACT

The species of *Myrmoteras* from the Malay Archipelago are reviewed, and a key to the species is provided. Thirteen species are described as new: *Myrmoteras arcoelinae*, *baslerorum*, *brigitteae*, *danieli*, *elfeorum*, *estrudae*, *ivani*, *jacquelineae*, *marianneae*, *maudeae*, *nicoletteae*, *susanneae*, *tonboli*. The distribution of *Myrmoteras* within the Malay Archipelago is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Ants are among the most familiar animals. They are considered to be a relatively well known insect family, with most of the genera described, and with approximately 12,000 named species of an expected total of 20,000 species (HÖLLDOBLER & WILSON, 1990). Recent collecting in the Malay Archipelago, especially from leaf litter, confirms these figures as a minimal estimate but also points out where a potentially rich source for new species, and thus a higher number of species, can be found.

In the collections of the Natural History Museum, London and the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle, Geneva are, for example, in each of the two taxa *Leptogenys* and *Dacetini* over 100 undescribed species based on samples from only a few expeditions led by researchers not specialized on ants. This includes only leaf litter ants and not those of the canopy, but from where high numbers of species are also expected (VERHAAG in HÖLLDOBLER & WILSON, 1990; WILSON 1987). In a comparative quantitative study in Northern Sulawesi, HAMMOND (1990) pointed out, that in the Coleoptera the leaf litter fauna is richer than the canopy fauna. These facts point out a possible doubling of the number of existing ant species and that the attribute 'rare' for certain ant taxa should not yet be applied, but is better considered to be due to a lack of collections and revisionary studies.

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