

OBSERVATIONS ON THE GENUS *TERATANER* IN
MADAGASCAR (HYMENOPTERA: FORMICIDAE)

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INTRODUCTION

The present study was inspired by the analysis of endemism in Malagasy ants by William L. Brown (1973). The rare myrmicine ant genus *Terataner*, presently with twelve described species, is known only from the Ethiopian and Malagasy zoogeographical regions. Bolton (1981) revised the Ethiopian species of *Terataner*, and provided illustrations and a key to workers. In the same paper, Bolton described a new species of *Terataner* from Madagascar and included an illustrated key to workers from the Malagasy region. An ongoing study of Malagasy *Terataner* resulted in the discovery of many new species (Alpert, in prep.) and the first natural history data on any of the ants in this group. This new information separates *Terataner* into two distinct groups with fundamental biological differences.

The first group, containing four closely related arboreal species, occurs only in tropical West Africa. According to Bolton (1981, pers. comm.), these species construct nests in rotten parts of standing timber, often located a considerable distance above the ground. The males in this group are unknown and the female reproductives, although presently undescribed, are morphologically typical ant queens. No other biological information is available on this group of ants.

The second, much larger, group of *Terataner* species nests near the ground and inhabits preformed plant cavities, such as hollow twigs and burrows of wood-boring insects. One species occurs in the Transvaal of South Africa, one in East Africa, one in the Seychelles, and five are currently recognized in Madagascar. The males, known from only a few species, are morphologically unusual. The newly discovered queens are wingless ergatoid