

Scientific note

First record of neotropical genus *Semeiochernes* Beier, 1932 in Ecuador

(Pseudoscorpiones, Chernetidae)

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Genus *Semeiochernes* Beier, 1932, established for *Semeiochernes militaris* Beier, 1932, is represented in Central and South America by three species: *S. armiger* (Balzan, 1892) (Brazil, Panama, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago), *S. militaris* Beier, 1932 (Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico) and *S. extraordinarius* Beier, 1954 (Venezuela) (Harvey 2013). The genus is characterized by robust and granulated palps that are highly sexually dimorphic (Fig. 1). Males possess greatly enlarged chelae and chelal peg-like processes, that are absent in females (Beier 1932, Zeh & Zeh 1992b).

The original descriptions of the species were based on chelal size and presence or absence of lateral process on palpal chela. However, rearing experiments from Panama have demonstrated that intrapopulation variability encompasses the full range of *Semeiochernes* "interspecific" chelal morphology (from small chelae without lateral processes to greatly enlarged chelae with pronounced lateral processes) and that the species status cannot be established using these male characters (Zeh & Zeh 1992b). Since then all specimens were described as *S. armiger* (Harvey 2013).

During the research performed in Ecuador, invertebrates were collected using sweeping method and light traps. Two males and two females of *S. armiger* (Fig. 1) were found phoretic on unspecified insect (01.03.-06.03.2014) in secondary tropical forest near the river Toachi at locality Otongachi, Union del Toachi env., Prov. Santo Domingo in Ecuador (-00.3208333, -078.9516667; 900 m a.s.l.). The material is deposited in the zoological collections on Department of Zoology, Comenius University, Bratislava.

The neotropical pseudoscorpion *S. armiger* inhabits decaying *Ficus* trees and disperses phoretically by attachment to the giant wood-boring fly, *Pantophthalmus tabaninus* Thunberg, 1819 (Pantophthalmidae, Diptera) (Zeh & Zeh 1992a, Santos et al. 2005). Our record corresponds with the known ecological requirements of the species and represents the first record of the genus in Ecuador.



Fig. 1. Adults of *Semeiochernes armiger*. A. Male. B. Female. Scale bar: 1 mm.

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