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**FIRST RECORDS OF THE ANT-LOVING CRICKET
MYRMECOPHILUS ACERVORUM (PANZER, [1799]) FROM ARMENIA
AND COMMENTS ON *MYRMECOPHILUS HIRTICAUDUS* FISCHER
VON WALDHEIM, 1846 (ORTHOPTERA: MYRMECOPHILIDAE)**

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New records of the ant-loving crickets *Myrmecophilus acervorum* (Panzer, [1799]) and *Myrmecophilus hirticaudus* Fischer von Waldheim, 1846 for Armenia are presented. *M. acervorum* is reported for the first time from Armenia and the Caucasus. The criteria used for identification are described.

Ant guest – Caucasus – Myrmecophilus

Ներկայացված են *Myrmecophilus acervorum* (Panzer, [1799]) և *Myrmecophilus hirticaudus* Fischer von Waldheim, 1846 ճռիկ-մրջնաստերների սոր գրանցումներ Հայաստանում: *M. acervorum* տեսակն առաջին անգամ է նկարագրված Հայաստանի և Կովկասի համար: Նկարագրված են չափորոշիչներ, որոնք օգտագործվում են նրանց նույնականացման համար:

Ճռիկ-մրջնաստեր – Կովկաս – Myrmecophilus

Представлены новые находки сверчков-муравьелюбов *Myrmecophilus acervorum* (Panzer, [1799]) и *Myrmecophilus hirticaudus* Fischer von Waldheim, 1846 в Армении. *M. acervorum* впервые описан для Армении и Кавказа. Описаны критерии, использованные для их идентификации.

Сверчок-муравьелюб – Кавказ – Myrmecophilus

Ant-loving crickets (genus *Myrmecophilus* Berthold, 1827) are small insects, which are known to live as guests in the nests of ants. To date, 57 valid species have been described worldwide [6]. From the Caucasus, only *Myrmecophilus hirticaudus* Fischer von Waldheim, 1846 was known previously from the Greater Caucasus (Teberda, Russia) and the Lesser Caucasus (Armenia, Meghri) [9].

Materials and methods. During a trip to Armenia in July 2011, ant nests under stones were checked for ant guests. All specimens of *Myrmecophilus* were collected.

Results and Discussion. Two species of *Myrmecophilus* were found in Lori province and Syunik province.

Myrmecophilus acervorum (Panzer, [1799]) (fig. 1) was found in the northern and southern parts of Armenia. All specimens were found in ant nests under stones: 10 adults ♀♀, 10 nymphs ♀♀ and 16 nymphs of unknown sex in nests of *Lasius* sp., 24.07.2011, Sisian, Sjunik province, 39° 33' 02" N, 45° 59' 43" E, 1780 m, leg. & coll. T. Stalling; 10 adults ♀♀, 5 nymphs ♀♀ and 4 nymphs of unknown sex in nests of *Lasius* sp., 1 nymph ♀♀ and 6 nymphs of unknown sex in nests of *Myrmica* sp., 04.08.2011, Dzoraget, Lori province, 40° 56' 57" N, 44° 37' 34" E, 1065 m, leg. & coll. T. Stalling. The habitat was grass steppes interspersed with stones at both localities.



Fig.1. *Myrmecophilus acervorum*, female, Dzoraget, Armenia, 04.08.2011

Myrmecophilus hirticaudus (fig. 2) was found in the northern part of Armenia. All specimens were found in ant nests under stones: 2 adults ♀♀, 1 adult ♂ in nests of *Camponotus* sp., 04.08.2011, Dzoraget, Lori province, 40° 56' 57" N, 44° 37' 34" E, 1065 m, leg. & coll. T. Stalling; 1 adult ♂ in a nest of *Camponotus* sp., 05.08.2011, Dzoraget, Lori province, 40° 56' 57" N, 44° 37' 34" E, 1065 m, leg. & coll. T. Stalling. The habitat was grass steppe interspersed with stones.



Fig. 2. *Myrmecophilus hirticaudus*, female, Dzoraget, Armenia, 04.08.2011

The records of *M. acervorum* are the first for Armenia and the Caucasus, and are the easternmost records known to date. Previously, the species was known from Austria [12], Czech Republic [3], France [4], [5], Germany [11], [14], Hungary [16], Luxembourg [13], Poland [1], Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast) [8] and Slovakia [8]. The exact eastern distribution boundary remains unknown. *M. hirticaudus* was previously known from the Crimea, the Caucasus [9], [10], [2], Croatia [15] and Bulgaria [7].

The criteria used for identification are described by Stalling & Birrer [15]. The adults of the two species differ distinctly according to the following criteria: body colour, dark reddish-brown with pale ochreous posterior border on the pronotum and tergite in *M. acervorum*, uniformly brown in *M. hirticaudus*; number of spines on the metatarsus of the hind legs, two dorsal spines in the proximal and medial positions in *M. acervorum*, three dorsal spines positioned in the proximal, medial and distal parts of the metatarsus in *M. hirticaudus* (spine sometimes absent in the medial position, whereas spine in the proximal position always present).

M. acervorum and *M. hirticaudus* were found together at Dzoraget in single cases and even in the same ant nests, which demonstrated sympatric occurrence. No males of *M. acervorum* were found so the species can also be assumed to reproduce parthenogenetically in this part of its range. *M. hirticaudus* males and females were found so the species can be assumed to reproduce sexually.

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