

New Records of *Apoica pallida* (Olivier, 1792) (Hymenoptera: Vespidae, Epiponini) in Bahia State

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Abstract. In this paper we record the occurrence of *Apoica pallida* (Olivier) (Hymenoptera: Vespidae, Epiponini) in state of Bahia, including taxonomic notes.

Keywords: Biogeography; Distribution; Taxonomy.

Novos Registros de *Apoica pallida* (Olivier) (Hymenoptera: Vespidae, Epiponini) no Estado da Bahia

Resumo. Nesse trabalho registramos a ocorrência de *Apoica pallida* (Olivier) (Hymenoptera: Vespidae, Epiponini) para o estado da Bahia, incluindo notas taxonômicas.

Palavras-chaves: Biogeografia; Distribuição; Taxonomia.

The genus *Apoica* Lepeletier is currently composed of ten described species (PICKETT & WENZEL 2007) which can be easily recognized by the enlarged ocelli and by the approximation of the eyes on the vertex (RICHARDS 1978). These characteristics, as well as the pale colors of some species, are often seen in nocturnal Hymenoptera (RICHARDS 1978). The nocturnal habits of *Apoica* are unique within the tribe Epiponini. With the exception of the vespine *Provespa*, no other social wasp genus is primarily nocturnal (PICKETT & WENZEL 2007). Caste differentiation is determined by queens, which are in some cases slightly smaller than workers, an atypical situation (RICHARDS 1978; PICKETT & WENZEL 2007). However, NOLL *et al.* (2004) demonstrated that queens and workers are approximately the same size. Their nests are arboreal, usually on a narrow branch. With a very characteristic shape, consists of a single open comb, circular in most species and without envelope (RICHARDS 1978; WENZEL 1998). According to RICHARDS (1978), *Apoica* is quite closely related to *Stelopolybia* (= *Agelaia*, see CARPENTER & DAY 1988), which was confirmed in phylogenetic studies proposed by CARPENTER (1991), WENZEL and CARPENTER (1994) and NOLL *et al.* (2004).

Apoica is widely distributed in the Neotropical region, extending from Mexico to Argentina (CARPENTER & MARQUES 2001). All species have been found in Brazil except *Apoica ellenae* Pickett & Wenzel (PICKETT & WENZEL 2007). According to RICHARDS (1978) and PICKETT & WENZEL (2007), none of the species of *Apoica* are known to inhabit the Bahia state; however SANTOS *et al.* (2007) and SANTOS *et al.* (2009) found *Apoica pallens* (Fabricius) in areas of Cerrado and Atlantic Rain Forest.

Apoica pallida Olivier had been found in Brazil, in the states of Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Ceará, Goiás, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Pará, Rondônia, and São Paulo (RICHARDS 1978; PICKETT & WENZEL 2007). The specimens of *A. pallida* seen in this study were deposited in the Johann Becker Entomological Collection at Museu de Zoologia da Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana and were collected in the municipalities of: A) Cruz das Almas; B) Ituberá; C) Jussari; D) Feira de Santana and E) Porto Seguro (see Figure 1). *A. pallens* and *A. pallida* have been frequently collected in areas of Cerrado, as cited by RICHARDS (1978), and

also in the Atlantic Rain Forest. Unsurprisingly, the specimens found in Bahia were also collected in Atlantic Rain Forest near the Atlantic coast with the exception of one specimen which was collected in Feira de Santana, probably at the campus of the Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana (UEFS). Feira de Santana is the second biggest town in northeast region of Brazil, severely antropized and considered an Atlantic Rain Forest - Caatinga transitional area. This finding might indicated that *A. pallida* also occurs in the semi-arid region in Bahia. However recent extensive expeditions to Pilão Arcado, Senhor do Bonfim, Paulo Afonso, Morro do Chapéu, Seabra, Curaçá, Coribe, Santa Terezinha and Casa Nova as part of Biodiversity Research Program (PPbio) have failed to show any evidence of such species in these localities.

We hope that this note will stimulate more expeditions in Bahia, a poor sampled state in biodiversity.

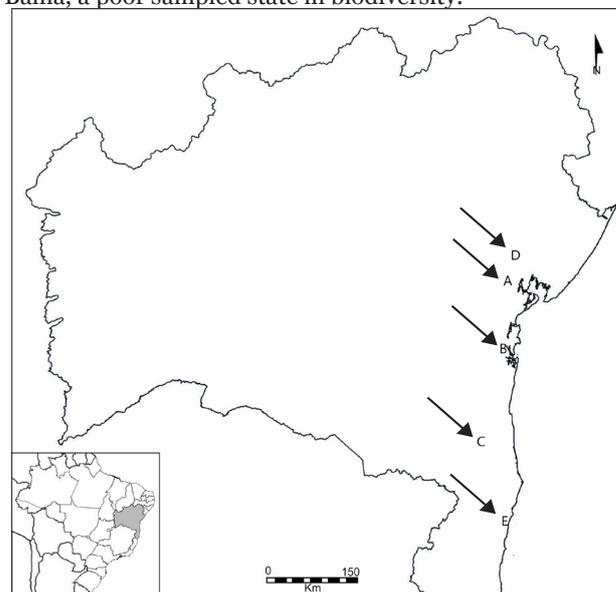


Figure 1: Map of Bahia showing the distribution of *Apoica pallida*.

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We dedicate this work to the late Kurt M. Pickett, our friend and who studied the genus *Apoica*.

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