

First record of the ponerine ant *Pachycondyla sennaarensis* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) in Iran, with notes on its ecology

by Siavosh Tirgari and Omid Paknia

Abstract. The mainly African stinging ant *Pachycondyla sennaarensis* is reported from Fars province in southern Iran, which represents the northern limit of its distribution. It occurs mostly in rural and urban habitats where the humidity reaches up to the soil surface, such as in parks. It preys on small arthropods using its sting.

Kurzfassung. *Pachycondyla sennaarensis*, eine vorwiegend in Afrika beheimatete Ameise, wurde erstmals in der Provinz Fars in Süd-Iran nachgewiesen. Dieser Fundort markiert die Nordgrenze ihrer Verbreitung. Sie kommt vorwiegend in städtischen und ländlichen Habitaten vor, meist an Stellen, an denen die Bodenfeuchtigkeit bis nahe an die Oberfläche reicht (so z.B. in Parks der Städte). Die Beute besteht hauptsächlich aus kleinen Arthropoden, die sie mit Hilfe ihres Stacheln erbeutet.

Key words. Ant, stinging, *Pachycondyla*, Iran, Middle East.

Introduction

The ponerine ant *Pachycondyla sennaarensis* was first described, as *Ponera sennaarensis*, by MAYR in 1862. The type locality is Sennar in Sudan. WHEELER (1922) (as *Euponera* (*Brachyponera*) *sennaarensis*) found it at many localities in West Africa, and LÉVIEUX & DIOMANDE (1978) described it as probably the most common ant in the Sudan, savannah regions, being found from Senegal across Sub-Saharan Africa to Somalia and up to the southern edge of the Sahara in Niger, north of Niamey, and halted by the massif of the ebony forest. COLLINGWOOD (1985) reported it from Saudi Arabia and described it as an aggressive species, distributed throughout the African tropics with Arabia probably being its northern limit. In 1997, he reported it from UAE.

This paper reports *Pachycondyla sennaarensis* from Iran for the first time and gives new information on its habitat, biology and ecology at the northern edge of its distribution area.

Material and methods

The study area, Lar city (27°41'N, 54°20'E), is situated in a desert and dry area in the Fars province of southern Iran (Fig. 1). The mean altitude is 915 m above sea level, and the mean annual air temperature is 24°C. The hottest months of the year are July and August. The