

Confirmation of the occurrence of *Centruroides gracilis* (Latreille 1805) (Scorpiones: Buthidae) in Jamaica

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The single record of the presence of the buthid scorpion *Centruroides gracilis* (Latreille 1805) in Jamaica was published by Pocock (1902), who based his record upon specimens actually deposited in the former British Museum, and one previous record derived from the type series of its junior synonym *Centrus heterurus* Karsch 1879. As the only posterior author who repeated and implicitly accepted this record was Armas (1988), for more than a century it remained unconfirmed whether *C. gracilis* was still established in Jamaica or not.

On February 29th, 2008, the Veterinary staff of the Santiago de Cuba Harbor Customs brought to the author one live adult female of *C. gracilis*, which had been captured inside a cargo ship coming from Jamaica. According to the harbor records, the ship CMACMG-Samba sailed from Kingston on February 24th, and after a 10 hours voyage arrived on February 25th to Santiago de Cuba, and as soon as the ship anchored, the crew descended into the hold and detected about a dozen of scorpions crawling on the floor; they became alarmed and immediately called to the Veterinary staff. Once the staff presented there, they entered the hold and immediately found the scorpion they retained alive for identification. After this, the hold was fumigated and sealed for 48 hours until the cargo could be unloaded safe.

The specimen recorded herein (fig. 1) represents the confirmation that at least one population of this species is still established in Kingston, and brings a very interesting question about the origin of the Jamaican population of *C. gracilis*. Due to the fact that this species is widespread and especially abundant in all major ports of Cuba, plus the nearness of this country to Jamaica, it could be expected that this specimen should be morphologically more similar to the Cuban specimens. But this adult female differs from them in having somewhat more robust pedipalp chelae and more elongate metasomal segments, a combination of features which is in turn diagnostic for Florida specimens and seems to indicate that the Jamaican population of *C. gracilis*, which is otherwise clearly introduced, originated actually from the USA. This specimen is still kept alive in captivity to attempt its mating with Cuban males and test whether both populations are still capable of interbreed or not, after this, it will be preserved and deposited in the personal collection of the author.

With the present note, there are two large and dark species of this genus confirmed as occurring in Jamaica: *C. gracilis* and *Cen-*



Figure: Female *Centruroides gracilis* from Kingston, still alive in captivity.

truroides morenoi Mello-Leitão 1945, which is very common all over this island and was also accidentally established in central Cuba (Armas, 1982). Both species can be easily identified by conspicuous differences if the setation of the pedipalps (basically bare in *C. gracilis*, hirsute in *C. morenoi*), development of metasomal keels (crenulate to weakly serrate in *C. gracilis*, strongly serrate to denticulate in *C. morenoi*), and granulation of the carapace and tergites (scarce and blunt in *C. gracilis*, dense and sharp in *C. morenoi*).

Finally, the author wishes to thank the Veterinary staff of the Santiago de Cuba harbor (especially to Roseline Brito Cumbá) for their kind donation of the scorpion herein studied.

References: ARMAS, L. F. DE. 1982. Algunos aspectos zoogeográficos de la escorpiofauna antillana. *Poeyana* 238, 17 pp. • ARMAS, L. F. DE. 1988. *Sinopsis de los escorpiones antillanos*. Edit. Científico-Técnica, La Habana, 102 pp. • POCOCK, R. I. 1902. Arachnida, Scorpiones, Pedipalpi and Solifugae. *Biologia Centrali-Americana*, Taylor & Francis (eds.), London, 71 pp.