



NOTA BREVE:

**New and interesting record of *Ethobunus meridionalis* (Caporiacco, 1951) from Venezuela (Opiliones: Zalmoxidae).**

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NOTA BREVE:

## **New and interesting record of *Ethobunus meridionalis* (Caporiacco, 1951) from Venezuela (Opiliones: Zalmoxidae)**

Oswaldo Villarreal Manzanilla<sup>1,2</sup>

### **Abstract:**

*Ethobunus meridionalis* (Caporiacco, 1951) (Zalmoxidae) is recorded from Hacienda El Limón, in Distrito Capital and Río del Medio and Playa Grande in Henri Pittier National Park, in Aragua State, Venezuela. In the latter locality at scarce 20 m from the water breaking line in coastal zone with high salinity sandy soils. This is the first record to the order Opiliones from this microhabitat in Venezuela.

**Key words:** Arachnida, Laniatores, neotropics, ecology, Zalmoxoidea.

### **Nuevo e interesante registro de *Ethobunus meridionalis* (Caporiacco, 1951) para Venezuela (Opiliones: Zalmoxidae)**

### **Resumen:**

*Ethobunus meridionalis* (Caporiacco, 1951) (Zalmoxidae) es registrado para la Hacienda El Limón en el Distrito Capital, para el Río del Medio y Playa Grande en el Parque Nacional Henri Pittier, en el Estado de Aragua, Venezuela. En esta última localidad localizado en ambiente costero a escasos 20 m de la línea de ruptura de las olas, sobre suelos arenosos con altos niveles de salinidad. Representa el primer registro del orden Opiliones para este tipo de ambientes en Venezuela

**Palabras clave:** Arachnida, Laniatores, neotrópico, ecología, Zalmoxoidea.

The Aragua State in Venezuela, is located in the north-central Venezuela, and is crossed by both branches of the Cordillera de la Costa. It has a great variety of natural habitats, resulting in a high biodiversity and interesting ecological niches. In the north zone of Aragua, is located the most ancient National Park of the country, N. P. Henri Pittier, which is extended from 440 m in south slope, reaching its higher altitude about 2,436 m in Pico Cenizo, and coming at sea level in the north slope.

In the park area, there is a degree of climatical factors like precipitation, temperature, insulation and humidity, which united to soil characteristics determines the species selection, conditioning the structure of communities (Prada & Torres, 1998).

In the mouth of the rivers in the north slope, have been formed interesting bays, one of them is Puerto Colombia in Río Grande del Medio.

In this low zone, there are two vegetal formation coastal valleys: associated to secondary vegetation and cultivable areas, generally associated to mouth of rivers; and vegetation of coastal and high salinity ambient, including ecological formation developed in conditions of saline soils of Caribbean littoral (Montaldo, 1966), like vegetation that grows on rockers coastal, affected by sea, sand beaches, lakes of brackish water and mangroves.

The harvestman fauna in the south slope of the National Park, principally that associated to rainforest near Rancho Grande Biological Station, and Periquito and Guacamaya peaks, is relatively well known, with about 18 species recorded, however, only 4 species have been recorded from north slope, all associated to rainforest zone (Kury, 2003a).

Recently revision of museums material and sampling has been carried out in two localities using the technique of sifting leaf litter in the north slope: Locality 1 - Río Grande del Medio, approximately 2 km from their mouth in an area with strong anthropical intervention, and Locality 2 - in coastal ambient in Playa Grande, in Choroní bay, in a stripe of vegetation in the beach sand, with predominance of trees *Uva de Playa* (*Coccoloba uvifera* L. Polygonaceae) and palm (*Coccus nucifera* L. Arecaceae) at scarce 20 m from the water breaking line (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Coastal vegetation in Playa Grande, Choroní Aragua State.

In both samplings were obtained exemplars of a single specie of harvestmen: *Ethobunus meridionalis* (Caporiacco, 1951) (Laniatores, Zalmoxidae), whose type locality is Hacienda La Trilla in transitional trophophilic forest with marine influence, at 200 m of altitude (González-Sponga, 1992). *Ethobunus* is a diverse genus of little harvestmen which inhabit mainly the litter, and includes 33 species distributed in Central America, north of South America and Greater Antilles; in Venezuela it is represented by six species in the following states: Aragua, Miranda, Sucre, Trujillo and Zulia. The new record is interesting because it represents the lowest altitude record from harvestmen in Venezuela; at same time, this is the first record of the Order to coastal ambient in this country, in an habitat with high salinity level. Laniatores are generally hygrophilous harvestmen with nocturnal habits, in many cases associated to forest areas, apparently with high level of endemism, suggesting this group like a good model for biogeographic studies (Pinto-Da-Rocha *et al.*, 2005).

Until now in South America from coastal ambient have been recorded *Baculigerus littoris* (Soares & Soares, 1979) (Escadabiidae) from Bahia State in eastern Brazil, *Acanthopachylus aculeatus* (Kirby, 1819), *Parampheres bimaculatus* (Mello-Leitão, 1932), *Pachylodes thorellii* Holmberg, 1878 (Gonyleptidae) and *Holmbergiana weyenberghi* (Holmberg, 1876) (Sclerosomatidae) by a lightly saline coastal area in Rio

de la Plata in Uruguay (Toscano-Gadea & Simó, 2004). Additionally, it is known the presence of two South American species of the genera *Eusarcus* Perty, 1833 and *Lacronia* Strand, 1942 (Gonyleptidae: Pachylinae) which inhabit plants of the family Bromeliaceae in sand dunes near of the sea, but in forest habitats (Kury, 2003b; Dr Adriano B. Kury, pers. comm.).

Abbreviations of depositories are: Museo de Historia Natural La Salle, Caracas, Venezuela (MHNLS) and Museo de Biología, Universidad Central de Venezuela (MBUCV).

### Zalmoxidae

#### *Ethobunus meridionalis* (Caporiacco, 1951)

*Parisminia meridionalis* Caporiacco, 1951. Types: Holotype MBUCV 721 –lost–. MBUCV 1177. Neotype designed by González-Sponga, 1987.

TYPE LOCALITY: Venezuela: Aragua, Henri Pittier National Park.

DISTRIBUTION: Venezuela: Aragua State, Hacienda La Trilla 200m (González-Sponga, 1987); Choroní, Playa Grande and Río Grande del Medio (3 m and 2 Km from the mouth respectively) (new records). Distrito Capital, Hacienda El Limón (new record).

MATERIAL EXAMINED: Venezuela: MHNLS IV-0240, Aragua State, Choroní, Playa Grande, 3m from the sea,

04.i.2006 (leg. M. O. Villarreal and L. A. Ovalles), 8 ex.; MHNLS IV-0241, Aragua State, Choroní, Río del Medio, 2 km from the sea, 04.i.2006 (legs M. O. Villarreal and L. A. Ovalles), 4 ex.; MHNLS IV-0250, Distrito Capital, Hacienda El Limón, 25.ii.1968 (leg. Gómez, F.), 1 male, determined by A. Pérez-González; MHNLS IV-0251, Distrito Capital, Suapo, Hacienda El Limón, 160 m from the sea, 3.iv.1969 (leg. R.

Velázquez), 1 female, determined by A. Pérez-González.

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