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Two new species of *Podonomus* (Diptera: Chironomidae: Podonominae) of the Brundin's *decarthrus* group from Ventania system, Argentina

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Abstract

The descriptions and illustrations of two new species of *Podonomus*, *P. tehuelche* and *P. quinquesetosus* are presented. Both species belong to the Brundin's *decarthrus* group and were collected in an "orogenic island", representing the first record of a named *Podonomus* species from Argentina outside the Andean-Patagonian region. Immatures and adults were collected at relatively low altitude for the genus (500 to 800 m a.s.l.). A key for the South American male adults and pupae of the *decarthrus* group is presented.

Key words: Diptera, Chironomidae, *Podonomus*, new species, key, Neotropics

Introduction

Ventania and Tandilia represent the only hill systems from the grassy steppes of Buenos Aires province, Argentina. Ventania is located SW of Buenos Aires (Fig. 1), extending along 170 km between 37°–39° S and 61°–63° W, in a NW-SE direction with the highest altitude of 1243 m a.s.l. (Kristensen & Frangi 1995). Ventania belongs to the biogeographic area of Distrito Pampeano Austral (Cabrera & Willink 1980), characterized by grassland and rocks. Because of its orogenic condition, this system was considered as "an island of biodiversity", in which the confluence of wildlife from the Brazilian region from the north and the Patagonia from the south occurs (Ringuelet 1961).

Most of the streams in the Ventania system are temporary, and rocky pools of different dimensions act as reservoirs of water when the streams are not flowing. These pools are one of the most important lentic habitats from this region and are present over the year. The knowledge of the Chironomidae fauna from the Ventania system is scarce, with *Thienemanniella liae* Paggi as the only known species at present (Paggi 2007).

Podonominae is a subfamily of Chironomidae whose immatures inhabit mainly cold streams and brooks. The major knowledge of the Podonominae is expressed in the Brundin's monograph (1966) concerning the transantarctic relationship of Chironomidae. Of the 15 known genera of Podonominae, 10 are present in the Neotropical Region, which exhibits highest specific richness with 85 species, representing the 54% of all described species of the subfamily (Ashe & O'Connor 2009).

The genus *Podonomus* in the southern hemisphere occurs from the highest areas of the Bolivian Andes to the Magellanic peninsula in South America, as well as in Tasmania, New South Wales and New Zealand in the Australian Region (Brundin 1966). In his monograph, Brundin divided the *Podonomus* species into five groups. Of these, the *decarthrus* group is conformed by 20 named and 6 unnamed species, of which two are present in Tasmania and Australia, and the remainder in South America.

Species of the Brundin's *decarthrus* group can be separated from the other groups by the following combination of characters. Male adult: eyes bare or hairy. Gonostylus with the apical lobe well developed, the subapical lobe variable, at least persistent as a bare triangular tooth; or, gonostylus strongly flattened and disk-like; the "i" seta of the subapical lobe present or absent; the "p" setae often reduced, commonly not discernible. Wings