New combinations and synonymies of leafcutter and mason bees of the Americas (Megachile, Hymenoptera, Megachilidae)

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Abstract

The taxonomic positions of 284 names on the genus Megachile (sensu Michener et al. 1994) of the Americas are clarified. A total of 166 types (164 holotypes and 2 cotypes) were examined. In 24 cases specimens determined by specialists were used and in 17 the published descriptions were analysed. The subgenera of 175 species are indicated for the first time and 94 are nomenclatural changes. Four lectotypes are designated. There are 11 new synonyms: brasiliensis Dalla Torre 1896 (= nigridorsis Vachal 1908 = brancoensis Mitchell 1930), eburneipes Vachal 1904 (= bernardina Schrottky 1913), fiebrigi Schrottky 1908 (= tergina Vachal 1908), guaranitica Schrottky 1908 (= marcida Vachal 1908), maura Cresson 1865 (= carlotensis Mitchell 1927), nigripennis Spinola 1841 (= hypocrita Smith 1853 = totonaca Cresson 1878), nudiventris Smith 1853 (= jurujubensis Cockerell 1927) pedalis Fox 1891 (= liguanensis Cockerell 1912) and poeyi Guérin-Méneville 1845 (= velhoensis Mitchell 1930). One is a change of specific name: moderata Smith 1879 (= mariannae Dalla Torre 1896) and one of subgenus: Moureapis new name (= Moureana Mitchell 1980 = Willinkella Laroca et al 1982 = Acentrina Schlindwein 1995). Two have changed to a new status: poeyi alleni Mitchell 1927 to alleni Mitchell and hoffmanseggiae var. hypoleuca Cockerell 1927 to hypoleuca Cockerell.

Key words: Megachile; catalogue; subgenera; Americas

Introduction

Members of the genus Megachile are leafcutter and mason bees. They are found throughout the Americas and are important pollinators of many crops and other useful plants, including trees. Despite their economic and ecological importance, difficulties in their identification have deterred field studies and the biology of few species is known.