

Description of a new Patagonian species of *Urophonius* Pocock (Scorpiones, Bothriuridae), from Meseta de Somuncurá, Argentina

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Abstract

Urophonius somuncura n. sp. (Scorpiones, Bothriuridae) is described and illustrated. This species is presumably endemic to the higher plains of the Meseta de Somuncurá (province of Río Negro, Argentina), a basaltic plateau in northern Patagonia. Its nearest relatives are *U. granulatus* Pocock, from southern Patagonia, and *U. tregualemuensis* Cekalovic, from central Chile, with all three belonging to the '*granulatus* species group'. The diagnostic characters for the new species include the development of the ventral submedian carinae on metasomal segment I, the number of ventral setae on the same segment and presence of tegumentary borders around them, and details of the pigment pattern on carapace, mesosomal tergites and metasoma, among others. *U. somuncura* n. sp. is seemingly a species active in summer, and its activity period is probably slightly asynchronous in respect to a sympatric *Bothriurus* species.

Key words: Scorpiones, Neotropics, Patagonia, Argentina, *Urophonius*, systematics, new species, natural history

Introduction

The 'Meseta de Somuncurá', a basaltic tableland located in the northern portion of the Argentinean Patagonia, has been the subject of great interest, featuring several surveys (Cei 1969; Ruiz Leal 1972). Although partially surrounded by the extensive Monte Biogeographical Province (Cabrera & Willink 1973), plant physiognomy and composition on the higher belts of the Somuncurá plateau show a clear Patagonian character, so that it represents a kind of eastwards 'digitation' of the Patagonian vegetation into the Monte limits (Ruiz Leal 1972; Cabrera & Willink 1973).