

A new species of *Passalozetes* (Acari: Oribatida) from the Andes mountains of Argentina

PABLO A. MARTÍNEZ* & ALFREDO C. HERRERO

*Departamento de Biología, Facultad de Ciencias Exactas y Naturales, Universidad Nacional de Mar del
Plata, Funes 3350, 7600 Mar del Plata, Argentina*

*Corresponding author: E-mail: pamartin@mdp.edu.ar

Abstract

Passalozetes (Passalozetes) alumbrensis n. sp., a new species of Passalozetidae (Acari: Oribatida), is described from the soil of a mountain peak in the Andes Range, west of Argentina. An expansion of the diagnosis of Passalozetidae is proposed.

Key words: *Passalozetes*, Passalozetidae, taxonomy, Argentina, Andes

Introduction

Passalozetidae Grandjean, 1954 shows a semi-cosmopolitan distribution and representatives are commonly found in arid environments (desert valleys and hills) of Holartic, Ethiopian and Neotropical regions. The family includes two genera with two subgenera each: *Passalozetes* Grandjean, 1932 and *Bipassalozetes* Mihelčič, 1957, with tri- and bidactyle tarsi respectively (Subías, 2004). In the Andes high mountains in Mendoza Province, western Argentina, the junior author took samples of soil at the summit of Cerro Alumbre, higher than 3500 m.a.s.l., under a shrub, in a place where exposed rocks were the main surface cover. From this sample we extracted many specimens of a new species of *Passalozetes (Passalozetes)*, that is described below. This was the only species present in the site, and, within *Passalozetes* species, the only found at this high altitude. Complementary observation under scanning electronic microscope allowed us to perceive some details hard to see under light microscope.