



New and little known earthworm species from the Mt. Nimba, Guinea (Oligochaeta, Acanthodrilidae: Benhamiinae)

CSABA CSUZDI¹, MARTINEZ ARNAUTH GUEI² & JÉRÔME EBAGNERIN TONDOH²

¹Systematic Zoology Research Group of HAS & Department of Zoology, Hungarian Natural History Museum, H-1431 Budapest, Pf. 137, Hungary. E-mail: csuzdi@nhmus.hu

²Ecologie et Gestion Durable des Sols, UFR des Sciences de la Nature / Centre de Recherche en Ecologie, Université d'Abobo-Adjamé 02 BP 801 Abidjan 02, Côte d'Ivoire

Abstract

A recent survey in the main habitat types of Mt. Nimba, Guinea (upland prairie, Serengbara forest and piedmont savannah) resulted in recording of 13 earthworm species of which 9 are first reported after the original description and three, *Dichogaster (Dichogaster) cornuta* **sp. n.**, *Guineoscolex geminatus* **sp. n.** and *Guineoscolex unguulatus* **sp. n.**, proved to be new to science. On the basis of the new material collected *Benhamia inaequalis* f. *nimbai* Omodeo is redescribed and resurrected from synonymy of *Guineoscolex inaequalis* (Michaelsen) as an independent species *Guineoscolex nimbai* (Omodeo). With 17 original figures.

Key words: Earthworms, Mt. Nimba, Guinea, *Dichogaster*, *Guineoscolex*

Introduction

The Mount Nimba range is stretching along the border of Ivory Coast, Liberia, and Guinea in West Africa. It is part of an ancient mountain massif, the “Guinean backbone” of Jurassic age. The mountain is about 40 km long and 8–12 km wide with highest peak of 1,752 m. Vegetation of the Mount Nimba is gradually changing by elevation. The summit is covered by high altitude prairie turning into dense evergreen forests in lower altitude. The forests give way to plains savannahs below *ca.* 500 m (Lamotte 1983, Lamotte & Roy 2003).

The region is strict nature reserve founded in 1943 and since then extensive researches have been carried out to explore its flora and fauna (Lamotte & Roy 2003). An overview of the earthworms of Mt. Nimba was published by Omodeo (1958) reporting six already known and 31 new species. Later Somon (1995) published on earthworms of the region recording one of the species (*Pickfordia magnisetosa*) by Omodeo (1958) and furthermore described three new species.

A recent survey in the main habitat types of Mt. Nimba (upland prairie, forest and piedmont savannah) resulted in recording of 13 earthworm species of which 10 are scantily known and three proved to be new to science and herewith described.

Materials and methods

The study sites are located on the Guinean part of the Mount Nimba Strict Nature reserve from 600 m to 1200 m altitude, covering the three main vegetation types of the mountain. These are upland prairie, the Serengbara forest and the piedmont savannah, with 10 sampling points selected per site.