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Description and ecology of a new species of *Eriopeltastes* Burmeister & Schaum, 1840 (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae: Cetoniinae: Trichiini), from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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A dedicated “Bioblitz” survey of the Ntinini Nature Reserve was organized and coordinated by Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal (EKZN) Wildlife, during the period 16–18 November 2010. The main aim of the Bioblitz was to provide biodiversity data that could assist in assessing the necessity of a formal proclamation for the protection of the reserve, within the scope of the integrated Biodiversity Conservation Planning of EKZN Wildlife.

A new species of the South African endemic genus *Eriopeltastes* was discovered during the early part of the survey. As virtually all species of this genus are regarded as micro-endemic, mountain relicts extremely susceptible to habitat disturbance/destruction, a rapid description of the new discovery is presented here, to provide support towards the conservation of its unique habitat that may be threatened by land use change in the near future.

The first author wrote the taxonomical part of this study, including the description of the new species. The second author contributed all natural history and ecological observations.

The description of morphological characters follows the terminology used by Krikken (1984) and Ricchiardi *et al.* (1999). Specimen length was measured from the anterior margin of the clypeus to the apex of the pygidium. Specimen width represents the maximum width of the elytron.

Photos of the holotype were taken with a Nikon Coolpix P6600 fixed to one of the eyepieces of a Wild dissecting microscope. Photos were processed with photo stacking technique, using Combine ZP (freeware free software by Alan Hadley, <http://www.hadleyweb.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk>). Finally, the background was removed from the photos using Adobe Photoshop, in order to increase clarity of resolution.

Collections are abbreviated as follows: DMSA—Natural Science Museum, Durban, South Africa; ISAM—Iziko South African Museum, Cape Town, South Africa; PCER—Private Collection Enrico Ricchiardi, Turin, Italy; PCR—Private Collection R. Perissinotto & L. Clennell, Durban, South Africa. Geographical abbreviations are as follows: ECA—Eastern Cape Province; FRS—Free State Province; KZN—KwaZulu-Natal Province; and MPU—Mpumalanga Province.

Eriopeltastes ntinini Ricchiardi, new species

(Fig. 2)

Type series. Holotype male, South Africa KZN, Ntinini Game Reserve, 18 XI-2010, Renzo Perissinotto & Adrian Armstrong legit (ISAM). 3 male paratypes, same data as the holotype (1 DMSA, 1 PCR, 1 PCER).

Holotype description. Length: 11.2 mm; width: 7 mm. *Head.* Black, wider than long, densely punctate, shiny, with centre of clypeus covered with scattered, testaceous setae; eye canthus covered with long, scattered, testaceous setae; clypeus tea-spoon shaped, with sides sharp, anterior margin rounded, with central depression; frons covered with long, dense, erected, testaceous setae pointing backwards; antennae testaceous, club straight, more than twice as long as clypeus. *Pronotum.* Black, opaque, covered with large, rounded, shallow punctation, becoming less dense towards central and apical areas; shape trapezoidal, with sides ridged but not crenulated; basal corners rounded, basal margin laterally sinuate, ridged basolaterally only; sides with white tomentum band approximating basal corner; surface entirely covered with dense, long, testaceous setae pointing backwards. *Scutellum.* Black, glabrous, semicircular in shape, enlarged; shiny, covered by dense, rounded punctation, except on narrow marginal band all around. *Elytron.* Testaceous,