

**On the Number of Ant Species in the Neotropical Region**

The compilation of a preliminary check-list of Neotropical and Brazilian ants, made for private use, and the hitherto obtained results in a survey of the ant fauna of São Paulo State in southeastern Brazil, and of Agudos, a county situated in the heart of São Paulo State, brought to light some valuable facts that forecast several interesting conclusions. Inasmuch as the data gathered by this attempt might be of a more general concern, I decided to publish here the sum and substance of the findings.

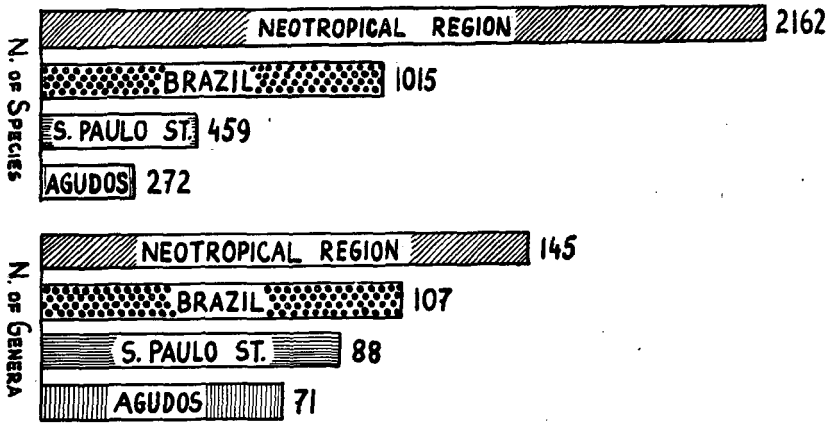
1. The Neotropical ant fauna is seemingly one of the richest of the globe, as regards number of genera and species. In a recent survey, Chapman & Capco (1951) registered 176 genera and 2080 species, not including subspecies and varieties, in the Oriental Region, generally famous for its luxuriant and highly diversified fauna. Our present count shows that the Neotropical Region loses little in number of genera and even surpasses the Oriental exuberance in the number of species. The up-to-date composition of the Neotropical ant fauna, as compared with that of Brazil, São Paulo State and Agudos, is shown in the following table:

Subfamily	Neotrop. Reg.		Brazil		S. Paulo St.		Agudos	
	genera	species	genera	species	genera	species	genera	species
Dorylinae	6	126	5	68	4	35	4	20
Cerapachyinae	4	26	4	11	3	4	2	2
Formicinae	28	307	25	165	24	79	19	48
Pseudomyrmecinae	1	117	1	59	1	21	1	20
Myrmicinae	83	1020	56	447	43	216	34	119
Delichoderinae	13	173	8	90	8	28	7	20
Formicinae	10	393	8	175	5	76	4	43
Totals:	145	2162	107	1015	88	459	71	272

Number of genera and species of ants in the Neotropical Region and in parts of the same region.

A superficial evaluation of recent revisionary work done in some of the groups of Neotropical ants shows that the synonymy on specific level and consequently the reduction in number of species was balanced or even surpassed by the proposition of new species and the raising of traditional varieties or subspecies to specific category. It is believed that also in the future the same balance will hold true, so that the essential proportion will probably remain unchanged.

2. Of the 145 Neotropical ant genera, just 11 contain more than half of the total number of described species. They are the following, listed in order of decreasing number of species (the number of species is given in parentheses): *Camponotus* (248), *Pheidole* (203), *Pseudomyrmex* (117), *Neivamyrmex* (98), *Solenopsis* (72), *Paracryptocerus* (64), *Crematogaster* (63), *Azteca* (61), *Gnamptogenys* (56), *Strumigenys* (51), *Macromischa* (51), making a total of 1184 species. It should be



Comparison between rate of decrease of number of species and genera according to reduction of territory.

noted, however, that only 4 of the preceding genera (*Neivamyrmex*, *Paracryptocerus*, *Gnamptogenys* and *Strumigenys*), holding 269 species, have recently been revised and are in workable condition. The remaining genera, containing nearly one half of the Neotropical ant fauna, leave much to be desired and identification in them is often practically hopeless. This is one of the sorest spots in myrmecological taxonomy, and was brought about by the heedless proliferation of taxa without concomitant synthesis and assimilation, as practiced by the myrmecographers of the last and the first four decades of the present century.

3. The comparison between the number of genera and species obtained in the different surveys shows that the number of species declines much more rapidly than the number of genera with the decrease of territory under consideration. This fact is visually evident in the appended diagram and needs no further comment.

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