

A third species in the rare Australian ant genus *Peronomyrmex* Viehmeyer (Hymenoptera: Formicidae)

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Abstract

A single specimen of the third species in the rare Australian ant genus *Peronomyrmex*, a member of the subfamily Myrmicinae, has been located in the collections of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. This specimen was thought to have been lost and its species-level identification was uncertain. It is now known to represent a third species, here named *P. greavesi*, and confirms the presence of this genus in northern Queensland. The genus is now known from four specimens stretching from Victoria northwards to northern Queensland, a distance of over 2000 km.

Key words: Australia, Formicidae, Hymenoptera, new species, *Peronomyrmex*

INTRODUCTION

The Australian ants of the genus *Peronomyrmex* Viehmeyer (subfamily Myrmicinae) are some of the world's rarest ants. They are known from only five specimens from four scattered localities along the east coast of Australia, and two of the species have been collected only once. The specimen described here was originally collected in 1937 by Tom Greaves and subsequently sent to W. L. Brown for study (Shattuck 1999). After its initial examination it was apparently placed in the Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) where it sat quietly until its "rediscovery" by B. Heterick in late 2004 (B. Heterick, pers. comm.). R. Taylor (pers. comm.), in preparing the first detailed study of this genus (Taylor 1970), had contacted Brown asking of the location of this specimen and had been told that it had been returned to Australia. However, examination of various Australian collections failed to locate it. It appears that the specimen had been carefully curated, labelled as a *Peronomyrmex* and placed safely in the MCZ, readily accessible to anyone taking the time to look for it (although one would need to understand the tribal classification of the myrmicines