

from temporal changes in populations, representing either the remnant of a declining population or the first individuals of an increasing population (Longino & Colwell 1997).

We suggest that the supposed rarity of many ant species may be explained by their inconspicuity or by their scarcity, and by sampling difficulties in suitable microhabitats (for instance, social parasites and hypogaeic species) (Espadaler & López-Soria 1991). In this way, many geographically restricted, rare, and/or threatened ant species might be widely distributed and even common if appropriate sampling techniques were employed in adequate temporal and spatial scales (DuBois & Davis 1998; Longino *et al.* 2002; King & Porter 2005).

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