

## Introduction

*Aenictus* Shuckard, 1840 (subfamily Aenictinae) is one of the true army ant genera (Wilson 1964, Gotwald 1995). Most species of the genus are specialized predators of other ants, especially of immature stages (Gotwald 1976, 1995, Rościszewski and Maschwitz 1994). Only some Asian species such as *Aenictus gracilis* Emery, *Aenictus laeviceps* (Fr. Smith), *Aenictus hodgsoni* Forel, and *Aenictus paradentatus* Jaitrong & Yamane are known to hunt a variety of invertebrate prey, including ants, using a large number of workers in raids (Gotwald 1995, Hirosawa et al. 2000, Shattuck 2008, Jaitrong and Yamane 2011, Jaitrong et al. 2012). Foraging raids undertaken by these ants occur both day and night, usually across the ground surface but occasionally also in trees (Yamane and Hashimoto 1999). During raids, numerous workers attack ant nests in a small area, with several workers coordinating their efforts to carry large prey items back to the nest or bivouac.

The genus is one of the larger ant genera of the world. Currently 187 valid species and subspecies names are listed ([http://www.antwiki.org/Category:Aenictus\\_species](http://www.antwiki.org/Category:Aenictus_species)). In Southeast Asia, 80 species have been named. Among them 57 species belonging to 12 species groups are known only from the worker caste (Jaitrong and Yamane 2011, Jaitrong and Yamane 2012, Jaitrong and Hashimoto 2012). Several papers have discussed the species groups of *Aenictus*. The first paper evaluating species groups is Wilson (1964), in which he divided Asian, New Guinean and Australian members of the genus into seven distinct groups based on certain hypothesized “unique, unreversed” characters. Jaitrong and Yamane (2010) established the *Aenictus silvestrii* group to include three Southeast Asian species with less than 10 antennal segments. Jaitrong et al. (2010) treated seven Oriental and Indo-Australian species that have yellowish and slender body with long legs and antennae as belonging to the *Aenictus wroughtonii* group. Wiwatwitaya and Jaitrong (2011) treated two Southeast Asian species (*Aenictus hottai* Terayama & Yamane and *Aenictus yamanei* Wiwatwitaya & Jaitrong) that have reticulated first gastral tergite as belonging to the *Aenictus hottai* group. Jaitrong and Yamane (2011) established 12 species groups in the genus and revised the species of two species groups (*Aenictus currax* and *Aenictus laeviceps* groups) from the eastern part of the Oriental region, and Indo-Australian and Australasian regions. Jaitrong and Yamane (2012) revised the *Aenictus javanus* group to include six species and the *Aenictus philippinensis* group to include four species from Southeast Asia. Lastly, Jaitrong and Hashimoto (2012) treated six Southeast Asian species of the *Aenictus minutulus* group.

In the present paper we deal with the largest species group, the *Aenictus ceylonicus* group in Southeast Asia and describe nineteen new species based on the worker caste. Morphological and bionomic information is presented for each species. A key to the Southeast Asian species is given. We omit the male-based names from the species treatment in this paper, following Wilson (1964). We anticipate that male-based names will eventually be matched with worker-based names using DNA information, but until then it is important to develop a sound worker-based taxonomy.