Subedi), MK 21−283 Winkler trap; 26 workers, NPL 29, Sankhawalava Maghang Kharka, Makalu Barun Conservation Area. 27°36'18.5" N 87°7'30" E, 2634 m, 7.11.2005 (D. Emmett), MK−LA5, secondary forest, in mammal trap at bait; 10 workers, NPL 30, Sankhawalava Maghang Kharka, Makalu Barun Conservation Area. 27°36'18.5" N 87°7'30" E, 2634 m, 7.11.2005 (Alpert and Alonso), 0397, near river in meadows and woods (NHMB, SIZK, ELMES).

Measurements and indices see table 1.

Distribution and ecology. *M. indica* appears to be fairly widespread in the southern slopes of the Himalaya (Nepal, India, Bhutan), where it lives in open forest at about 2500 m asl.

**Comparison of the species**

The Malaku material has led us to conclude that the *M. indica* series determined by A. G. Radchenko and G. W. Elmes (1998, 2001) contained a mixture of three rather similar species that live sympatrically on the southern slopes of the Himalaya. *M. weberi* clearly is a distinct species from *M. indica* being much smaller (tabl. 1) and "finer" with generally a more reticulate sculpture on the head, and frontal carinae that curve outwards to merge with the few rugae, which surround antennal sockets (compare fig. 6, *a-e* with 7, *a-g*). Even when standardised for size there is a clear difference between these two species (making no allowances for multiple comparisons most means are very significantly different − in most cases $P < 0{,}00001$ by simple t-test): taking the standardised measurements that deviate from those for *M. indica* by > 5% (table 1) *M. weberi* has relatively shorter appendages (compare sSL and sHTL), a less high but wider petiole, and narrower but longer postpetiole combined with longer and more divergent propodeal spines (compare sESL and sSED).

*M. alperti* is a more enigmatic species because it is known only from two series from the same local geographic area in Nepal. It is somewhat more stocky than *M. indica* having a relatively shorter alitrunk and shorter appendages (compare sAL, sHTL and sSL in Table 1), a distinctly more robust petiole and longer propodeal spine (compare sPH, sPW and sESL). The differences in the waist region are obvious visually (compare fig. 7 *c* and 7 *g*): striking differences are the bluntly rounded metapleural lobes that are quite distinct from those of *M. indica* and *M. weberi*, and waist nodes that are more rounded with more reticulation and less striation than *M. indica*. In some respects, *M. alperti* more resembles *M. weberi* by its relatively short appendages, but apart from the huge difference in body size (on average HW of *M. alperti* is 38% larger than that of *M. weberi*), they are easily separated by their very different waist region (see above).

Based on our current understanding of variability in the *ritae* species-group we expect that the Indian fauna might comprise one or two widespread species and many local endemics that are restricted to different mountain systems. *M. indica* as recognised here and *M. weberi* are clearly good species and might be widespread in the Himalaya. *M. alperti* is probably a local endemic close to *M. indica*. Even when the *M. weberi* and *M. alperti* specimens that were included originally to *M. indica* by A. G. Radchenko and G. W. Elmes (1998) are excluded, *M. indica* as recognised here remains morphometrically variable (note the larger than expected number of individuals falling outside the 95% confidence limits in fig. 5). We suspect that the "old" material might still comprise two (or even more) species. The two type specimens come from the Darjeeling region and are small and not particularly "typical" of the majority of *M. indica* material. We have very few other specimens from this region and there remains a possibility that when more are available for study, *M. indica* from Darjeeling will prove to be a different species to the Nepal and Bhutan specimens. A similar problem occurred with a series of 10 workers collected from Sampa Kotoka, Bhutan that mostly are larger than typical for *M. weberi*, but smaller than *M. indica* workers and could be an endemic Bhutan form close to *M. weberi*. We identify them as *M. weberi* because all 10 clustered with