

**Myrmecocystus melliger** Forel

*Myrmecocystus melliger* Forel, 1886. Annales Société Entomologique de Belgique, 30:202. ♀.

*Myrmecocystus melliger* var. *semirufus* Emery, 1893. Zoologische Jahrbuch, Abt. für Systematik, 7:667 (in part).

*Myrmecocystus melliger* subsp. *mendax* var. *comatus* Wheeler, 1908. Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., 24:352, fig. 5, ♀ ♀ ♂. Wheeler, 1912, Psyche, 19:173. NEW SYNONYM.

*Myrmecocystus comatus*, Creighton, 1950. Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., 104:442; Gregg, 1963, Univ. Colo. Press, p. 643.

The types of *M. melliger* and *M. comatus* have been available to me and have been compared with one another, and found to be the same. It is unfortunate that *M. comatus* is the same as *M. melliger* since this necessitates applying a completely revised concept to an old name. How Wheeler made the error he did is not difficult to understand, even though Forel had sent him specimens from the original series of *M. melliger*. As pointed out above, Wheeler was convinced that some species do not form repletes. During his extensive field work in this genus, he never found repletes in the nests of the ant which he described as *M. melliger comatus*. Obviously, in his concept, this could not be the same as Forel's *M. melliger*, since that was known to produce repletes. On the other hand, another very similar ant commonly had repletes present in the nest, and Wheeler was bound to equate this with *M. melliger*. In so doing, he ignored the specimens of true *M. melliger* and relied instead on behavioral data interpreted in accordance with an incorrect postulate. Further, his own field data were inadequate, as I took a colony of *M. comatus* (i.e., *M. melliger*) in the Jeff Davis Mountains, the type locality of *M. comatus*, which contained several fully developed repletes.

**Myrmecocystus semirufus** Emery

*Myrmecocystus melliger* var. *semirufus* Emery, 1893. Zoologische Jahrbuch, Abt. für Systematik, 7:667 (in part).

Although Wheeler had a cotype of this species available to him, he misidentified the ant and applied this name to a different taxon. The correct identity of *M. semirufus* has never been recognized until now. This species is known only from semi-desert mountain areas in southern California. I have seen specimens from Riverside, San Bernardino, Los Angeles and Inyo Counties.

Although very closely allied to *M. mendax*, it differs consistently from that species in the characters given below in the key. The two species occupy very similar habitats in the Joshua Tree-Juniper Woodland association, but appear to be allopatric. In California, *M. mendax* is known only from scattered desert mountain ranges in the eastern Mojave Desert, *M. semirufus* from the San