



FIG. 1. *Ponera leae* Forel. Petiolar node in side view. Drawn from a specimen collected at Paihia, New Zealand.

fine longitudinal striae, than are those of *caledonica*; they appear as subopaque, whereas in *caledonica* they are moderately to strongly shining.

(3) The punctulation of the first and second gastric segments is somewhat more coarse, and close, than that of *caledonica*.

(4) The body colouration is darker than that of *caledonica*, medium reddish brown, as opposed to light reddish brown.

#### *Ponera norfolkensis* (Wheeler)

*Ponera leae oculata* Wheeler, 1927, Proc. Amer. Acad. Arts Sci. 62: 121-153; pp. 130-131, fig. 1, worker, queen, original description.

TYPE LOCALITY: Norfolk Island.

*Ponera leae norfolkensis* Wheeler, 1935, Occ. Pap. Bishop Mus. 11(11): 1-56; p. 13, new name for *oculata*, name preoccupied.

The following details have been supplied by Dr. Wilson; they are based upon two syntype workers in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University.

(1) HW 0.43 mm.-0.44 mm., HL 0.56 mm.-0.57 mm., SL 0.36 mm., CI 76-77, SI 84-85, PW 0.35 mm., petiolar node length 0.20 mm., dorsal petiole width 0.29 mm. (PW, petiolar length, and petiolar width are based on one specimen only.)

(2) Size larger than that of either *leae* or *caledonica*.

(3) Eye developed as in *caledonica*.

(4) Propodeal sculpturing as in *leae*.

DISCUSSION: Within the *Ponera tenuis* species group Wilson (1957) recognized several subgroups. One of these, his *caledonica* subgroup, included *P. caledonica* of New Caledonia, and the east Australian *P. exedra* Wilson. The major features of this subgroup are the relatively large size, elongated head, thick petiolar node, and light colouration; characters which are shared also by *leae* and *norfolkensis*, discussed above. Accordingly the subgroup may be extended to include these two species, and by nomenclatural priority must now become known as the *Ponera leae* subgroup.

In addition, relationship between *leae*, *norfolkensis*, and *caledonica* is particularly marked. Indeed Wilson, who has checked one of my *leae* homoeotypes against the type series of *caledonica*, has noted (*in litt.*) that the characters of *leae* fall within the range of variation of *caledonica*, in such important characters as size, petiole shape, and head and scape proportions. Nevertheless the diagnostic features listed above seem to be characteristic. *P. norfolkensis* also seems to be a "good species," considering the characters listed above, and the differences between it and *leae* noted by Wheeler (1927).

Within the *P. leae* subgroup, therefore, *leae*, *norfolkensis*, and *caledonica* form a very closely related assemblage distinct from *P. exedra*. These three forms may best be considered as constituting a biological superspecies, with three apparently distinct allopatric species developed on New Caledonia, Norfolk Island, and Tasmania. Full specific recognition has been accorded these forms due to the apparently discontinuous nature of the variation in their diagnostic features, and the known facts regarding the often very subtle species differences in other, better represented, species of *Ponera*.