

**A monographic revision of the rare tropicopolitan
ant genus *Probolomyrmex* Mayr
(Hymenoptera: Formicidae)**

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SYNOPSIS

Workers and queens of the genus *Probolomyrmex* are redescribed, and the male and immature stages are described for the first time. Accounts are given of the synonymy, systematic position, life history and biology of the genus. A key to the nine species of the world fauna is included. Descriptions are given of the worker of a new species from Guinea, of the worker of a new species from Guadalcanal and of the worker, queen and male of a new species from Australia. Redescriptions, distribution records and biological notes are given for the remaining six species.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE genus *Probolomyrmex* includes nine known species, three of which are described below as new. Its members have an exceptionally uniform general habitus and are among the most peculiar and easily recognised of all ponerine ants. The group is circumtropical in distribution, with three species in each of the major tropical areas of the globe: African, Indo-Australian and American. These ants are extremely rare; only 57 specimens have been collected, more than half of them in a single sample. Only four species have been taken more than once, none of them more than twice, and only three of them at more than one locality. Three species are represented exclusively by their holotypes, a lone male is known, and the immature stages are available for only one species.

Previous publications on the genus have consisted mainly of scattered descriptions of single species and catalogue lists. No earlier author was able to consider more than a single caste of the species before him, and all previously studied specimens were either workers or dealate queens. A male specimen, described as *Probolomyrmex palauensis* by M. R. Smith, was erroneously associated with the genus and is transferred below to *Leptanilla*. Almost all earlier type material has been gathered for *Trans. R. ent. Soc. Lond.* **117** (12). Pp. 345–365, 35 figs. 1965. 15