

fine grass that are themselves quite dry even if they are surrounded by water, although it seems likely that nests may be temporarily submerged when the snows melt in Spring. In our experience, nests of *M. vandeli* are always sympatric with *M. scabrinodis*, with the latter nesting in wetter tussocks of coarser vegetation. There is thus a distinct partition of habitat on a fine level but not on a wider scale; no doubt this, combined with the similarity of the workers to *M. scabrinodis*, has led to the failure to recognise this species. Having seen *M. vandeli*'s habitat at Yenne, we soon found it on similar-looking sites in two areas of France, over 100 km apart, and on one site in Switzerland. We have also been told of its occurrence in the German/Austrian Alps and in Czechoslovakia (Petr Werner pers. comm.). We suspect that it is in fact a widespread species, possibly confined to the mountains of Central and Southern Europe. Judging by its habitat requirements, it is likely to be more common than *M. scabrinodis* in some parts of the Alps.

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