

THE *Lasius* (*Chthonolasius*) *umbratus* (HYM.,
FORMICIDAE) SPECIES COMPLEX IN NORTH EUROPE

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Wilson (1955) took into account 42 described European forms related to *Lasius umbratus* Nylander. He was able to separate only two of these as distinct species from *L. umbratus*. These were *L. bicornis* Foerst. and *L. rabaudi* Bondroit. He considered the remainder to be more or less trivial variants of a single variable holarctic species *L. umbratus*. The more important synonyms included *L. affinis* Schenck and *L. mixtus* Nylander. Wilson's important revision has not excited the critical comment it deserved in Europe. Only Forsslund (1957) noted that *L. mixtus* and *L. umbratus* in Nylander's restricted sense appeared to him quite distinct, in Scandinavia at least. Collingwood (1957) was prepared to accept Wilson's synonymy on the information available at that time, but drew attention to features in both important synonyms that did not appear to be fully resolved in Wilson's paper. Boven (1959) ignored Wilson's work entirely in a key to Netherland ants and continued to use the names *L. mixtus* and *L. affinis*, providing keys for their separation from *L. umbratus* without further discussion. In this paper, *Lasius affinis* (Schenck) and *L. mixtus* (Nylander) are considered afresh. Evidence is given to show that *L. affinis* is distinct from *L. umbratus* even in the wide sense used by Wilson. An examination of a sufficient number of samples provides grounds also for re-establishing the separate identity of *L. mixtus*.

Lasius (*Chthonolasius*) *affinis* (Schenck)

(*Formica affinis* Schenck, 1852; *Lasius affinis* Mayr, 1861; *Lasius bicornis* var. *affinis* André, 1881; *Lasius umbratus affinis* Forel, 1915; *Formicina affinis* Bondroit, 1918; *Lasius* (*Chthonolasius*) *affinis* Stitz, 1939; *Lasius* (*Chthonolasius*) *affinis* Boven, 1955; *Lasius* (*Chthonolasius*) *umbratus* Wilson, 1955 *partim*.)

Schenck (1852) referred to this as *Formica affinis* in his original paper, but clearly included it in the *umbratus* species group as distinct from the '*Formica niger* L.' group and from what is now known as the genus *Formica* in its present restricted sense. His original types are probably no longer available, but through the courtesy of Professor E. Kessel of the University of Marburg, I have been able to examine probable syntypes labelled *Lasius*