

## MYRMECIA FORCEPS Roger

*Myrmecia forceps* Roger, 1860, Berl. Ent. Zeitschr. 5: 34, worker.

*Myrmecia singularis* Clark, 1952, Formic. Australia, Melbourne, 1: 26-27, fig. 5, worker. NEW SYNONYMY.

The type of *M. singularis* is a worker with the structure of *M. forceps* and "colour almost entirely that of *M. rufinodis* Smith." Specimens taken by myself at Kingscote, Kangaroo Island, South Australia fit this description quite satisfactorily, and Kingscote is very probably the exact type locality for Clark's species. At Kingscote, *M. rufinodis* is the dominant *Myrmecia* along the coast, and its nests are very numerous and conspicuous there. I took the few *singularis* specimens in the midst of this area from a nest notable only for its inconspicuousness; the entrance consisted of a single hole without a mound or crater and was rather well concealed in the leaf litter. Considerable digging revealed only a very few ants, which contrasted in their timidity with the aggressive defenders of the populous neighboring *rufinodis* nests. I feel that the situation at this locality can be explained as a case of Müllerian mimicry. It should be noted that the Kingscote series copied most closely the coloration of the *rufinodis* workers of corresponding size, even to following exactly the same variations in pattern.

As interesting as this situation seems, I cannot support *singularis* as a species distinct from *forceps*. The series in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, while limited, show every degree of intergradation to the "typical" condition of *forceps* if one collects all specimens with *forceps*-type mandibles from all localities into one group for comparison. The "typical" coloration is ferruginous red, with gaster blackish, and mandibles and appendages much lighter and more yellowish; I have a series from Heathcote, New South Wales, answering to this color form (W. M. Wheeler *leg.*). A form with darker head, mentioned by Clark (1952, p. 24), is represented in my present series by examples taken at Sutherland, New South Wales (C. P. Haskins) and by myself on the high mallee heath of inland Kangaroo Island just east of Sandy River. In the latter locality, the nest was a low, flat mound about 2 feet in diameter, with a single entrance hole in the center surrounded by a radiating circle of short sections of twigs arranged with considerable symmetry on the surface of the mound. In both these and the Sutherland specimens, the alitrunk is unclouded ferruginous, while the head is largely or wholly brownish-black. Series from SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Port Lincoln (F. E. Wilson), Goolwa (Zeitz)