

from the central and northern Palaearctic, there is probably no paper without mentioning *L. niger* as an element of the local myrmecofauna or a member of a particular ant community.

In the first revision of the genus *Lasius* F. (WILSON 1955) which was made nearly two hundred years after *L. niger* had been first described by LINNAEUS, it retained its taxonomic status. It was only in a second revision (SEIFERT 1991), that this hitherto unquestioned species was separated into two sibling species: *L. niger* (LINNAEUS, 1758) and the new *L. platythorax* SEIFERT, 1991. According to SEIFERT, this surprising decision was made on the basis of morphological differences accompanied by distinct ecological differentiation between the forms. In eastern Germany, *L. niger* generally inhabits moderately xerothermal open habitats (dry and semi-dry grasslands), and it shows strong synanthropic tendencies (it is abundant in arable lands, in urban and suburban green); it avoids shaded woodland and undisturbed bogs and fens. *L. niger* nests in soil and any above-ground constructions are built of mineral particles. *L. platythorax*, on the other hand, clearly prefers more humid sites. It inhabits all types of forest as well as bogs and fens, and avoids open sites, especially anthropogenized ones. This species usually builds its nests in organic substrate, most frequently in dead wood, but also in vegetation pads, in grass tussocks with a humus root layer: it makes no above-ground mineral constructions (SEIFERT 1991, 1992, 1996).

After nearly a decade, it seems that the majority of myrmecologists still do not approve of SEIFERT's division of the "old" *L. niger*. However, the entire «*L. niger*» material from Poland present in the ant collection in the Museum and Institute of Zoology, PAS, in Warsaw, was revised in this respect, albeit not without scepticism. The result was surprisingly explicit: the Linnaean *L. niger* does include two species which are fairly easily distinguishable morphologically. Quantitative proportion of both forms in the collection of the MIZ PAS is close to 1:1 but paradoxically despite its widespread abundance, the available material is not rich. The following though comes to mind as an aside: who would ever have wanted to collect *L. niger* specimens when they could be identified in the field at first glance, without slightest doubt that a mistake was possible?!

Below is presented a list of the material divided according to the geographic regions of its origin (following the system adopted in Katalog Fauny Polski (A Catalogue of the Fauna of Poland; see PISARSKI 1975).

***Lasius niger* (LINNAEUS, 1758)**

Baltic Coast (Pobrzeże Bałtyku):

- Piesznno ad Strzelno, 23 V 1900 (♂, ♀), 16 IX 1911 (♂, ♀), leg. E. SCHMIDT;
- Międzyzdroje (island Wolin), 10 and 12 VII 1964, 24 VI 1965 (♂), leg. A. DRABER-MOŃKO;
- Wapnica (island Wolin), 31 VIII 1966 (♀, ♀), leg. B. PISARSKI.