

A new species of ant-loving cricket, *Myrmecophilus* Berthold, 1827, and comments on *M. nigricornis* (Chopard, 1963) from the Middle East

(Orthoptera: Myrmecophilidae)

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Abstract. A new species of ant-loving cricket, *Myrmecophilus orientalis* sp. n., is described based on individuals collected in Jordan and material from the collection of the Muséum d'Histoire naturelle de Genève (MHNG) originating from Turkey. The species was collected at Ajloun in northern Jordan and at Mağaracık in southern Turkey. In Jordan, *Messor* sp. and *Camponotus* sp. were found as host ants. The habitat at both places is partly degraded evergreen oak forest (*Quercus* sp.), partly cultivated with olive groves and crop fields. The adults and the habitat are illustrated. The first record of *Myrmecophilus nigricornis* Chopard, 1963 for Jordan is also given.

Key words. New species, Myrmecophilinae, *Myrmecophilus orientalis*, ant guest, Jordan, Turkey.

Introduction

Ant-loving crickets (genus *Myrmecophilus* Berthold, 1827) are small crickets that are known to live as guests in the nests of ants. According to EADES & OTTE (2009), 58 valid species have so far been described worldwide. The genus has an almost cosmopolitan distribution. The following species are known from the Middle East: *Myrmecophilus americanus* Sausure, 1877 was recorded from Israel (CHOPARD 1963, WETTERER & HUGEL 2008), *M. brevipalpis* Chopard, 1948 was described from Saudi Arabia (CHOPARD 1948), *M. nigricornis* Chopard, 1963 was described from Israel (CHOPARD 1963), *M. ochraceus* Fischer, 1853 was found in Syria (BACCETTI 1966), and *M. wahrmani* Chopard, 1963 was described from Israel (CHOPARD 1963). *M. cottami* Chopard, 1922, was recorded from Egypt by EBNER (1956), but these specimens probably belong to *M. americanus* (WETTERER & HUGEL 2008).

During an expedition to Jordan in 2009, we surveyed ant nests for ant-loving crickets and found two small series of *Myrmecophilus* in nests in two different regions of the country. A new species of *Myrmecophilus* from northern Jordan is described here and notes on the first record of *Myrmecophilus nigricornis* from Jordan are given.

Material and methods

More than 100 ant nests were checked for *Myrmecophilus* during a trip to Jordan between 17 May and 5 June 2009. The ant nests were found by turning stones. At Ajloun (Ajloun governorate) in the northern hills of Jordan, a small series of three individuals of *Myrmecophilus* was found in ant nests. In Shawbak (Ma'an governorate), three *Myrmecophilus* were also found in ant