

On the Afrotropical species of *Myrmoplasta* (Heteroptera: Pyrrhocoridae)

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Abstract. *Myrmoplasta kmenti* sp. nov. (brachypterous morph) from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (former Zaire), and macropterous morph of *M. mira* Gerstäcker, 1892, from Swaziland are described. New distributional records of *M. vittiventris* Carlini, 1894, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania are given. *Myrmoplasta potteri* Martin, 1900, syn. nov., and *M. potteri* var. *nigra* Courteaux, 1922, syn. nov., are considered junior synonyms of *M. vittiventris*, and *M. pseudomira* Ahmad & Zaidi, 1987, syn. nov., a junior synonym of *M. mira*. The ancestral stock of the genus *Myrmoplasta* Gerstäcker, 1892, and the phylogenetic relationships of its Afrotropical species are discussed.

Keywords. Heteroptera, Pyrrhocoridae, *Aderrhis*, *Courtesius*, *Dermatinus*, *Myrmoplasta*, morphology, taxonomy, new species, new synonyms, faunistics, Afrotropical region

Introduction

Myrmoplasta Gerstäcker, 1892, is a depauperate genus of the family Pyrrhocoridae, characterized by a peculiar myrmecomorphic body shape and distinct sexual dimorphism; both characters are unique within the Pyrrhocoridae. Until recently, six species of *Myrmoplasta* were recognized, two from the Oriental region (BLÖTE 1933) and four from the Afrotropical region (ROBERTSON 2004, AHMAD & ZAIDI 1987). In this paper, three new synonyms are established and one new Afrotropical species is described. The phylogenetic relationships of *Myrmoplasta*, morphology of their fore legs and other morphological characters are briefly discussed.