

Revision of Afrotropical species of the *Philonthus abyssinus* species group (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae: Philonthina)

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Abstract. The *Philonthus abyssinus* species group of the genus *Philonthus* Stephens, 1829, is proposed, containing six species. Two species are described as new: *Philonthus brendelli* sp. nov. (Central African Republic) and *P. varanus* sp. nov. (Kenya); four species are redescribed: *P. abyssinus*, Fauvel, 1880, *P. elgonensis* Tottenham, 1940, *P. pseudoabyssinus* Tottenham, 1940, and *P. tottenhami* Last, 1953. All species of the *P. abyssinus* species group are keyed; the aedeagi and relevant morphological characters of all species are figured.

Key words. Coleoptera, Staphylinidae, Philonthina, *Philonthus abyssinus* species group, taxonomy, new species, key, Afrotropical region

Introduction

Philonthus Stephens, 1829 is the largest genus of the subtribe Philonthina, currently containing more than 1,250 species, which occur in all zoogeographical regions. It is represented in the Afrotropical region by approximately 300 known species (HERMAN 2001). The infrageneric classification of the Afrotropical species is not yet satisfactorily settled. TOTTENHAM (1949) proposed a subdivision of species in species groups, based on the number of punctures in the dorsal rows of the pronotum. Later, TOTTENHAM (1962) classified some Afrotropical species in five species groups: *P. caffer*, *P. circumcinctus*, *P. peliomerus*, *P. rudipennis*, and *P. xanthorhapis* – *P. discoideus*, but many species were not assigned to any group. A new species group containing species related to *Philonthus abyssinus* Fauvel, 1880, is proposed in the present paper. Moreover, on examining material from the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, the Natural History Museum, London, and from my collection, I found two new species belonging to the *Philonthus abyssinus* species group.

Material and methods

The following acronyms are used to refer to the collections mentioned:

- BMNH The Natural History Museum, London, United Kingdom (Martin Brendell and Max Barclay);
FMNH Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, USA (James Boone);