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Authors: Perozo, José, and Issa, Solange

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HETEROTERMES TENUIS (ISOPTERA: RHINOTERMITIDAE): NEW RECORD FROM VENEZUELA.

JOSÉ PEROZO1 AND SOLANGE ISSA2

1Postgrado de Entomología, Instituto de Zoología Agrícola. Facultad de Agronomía
Universidad Central de Venezuela, Maracay, estado Aragua, Venezuela

2Departamento de Biología de Organismos. Universidad Simón Bolívar. Apdo. 89000. Caracas 1080-A, Venezuela

Heterotermes Froggatt (Isoptera: Rhinotermitidae) is a genus of subterranean termites comprising several major pest species. Heterotermes tunnel and feed on wood in contact with soil (Nickle & Collins 1992) and forage for wood above ground. This genus has been reported in the West Indies, Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, and several islands of the Caribbean (Emerson 1971; Nickle & Collins 1992; Constantino 2002; Szalanski et al. 2004). The last checklist of the termites from Venezuela (Issa 2000), the list by Snyder (1959), and Constantino (2000) reported only H. convexinotatus (Snyder) and H. crinitus (Emerson). In this note we report H. tenuis (Hagen) for the first time in Venezuela.

Samples of H. tenuis were collected from diverse localities in Venezuela. Specimens from Chaguaramas (Monagas state) were collected from wood lying on the soil and under dry bark of pine (Pinus caribaea), and had tunnels consisting of wood, sand, and clay. All samples were stored in 80% alcohol. Measurements of soldiers were performed with a stereomicroscope fitted with an ocular micrometer. The measurements included head length, head width, and pronotum width. Voucher specimens are maintained at the Laboratorio de Comportamiento of the Simón Bolívar University. The specific identifications were made with the key from Contanstino (2000).

We found that H. tenuis is distributed around the northeastern and southern Venezuela in several habitats (Fig. 1), and is present at different altitudes from 10 to 1100 m (Table 1). The specimens found were soldiers and workers. We found minor soldiers only in the sample from Los Cerritos (Fig. 2, Constantino 2000). The measurements for H. tenuis (n = 14 major soldiers) were 3.0 ± 0.24 mm (mean ± SD) for head length, 1.1 ± 0.03 mm for head width, and 0.8 ± 0.0001 for pronotum width. For the minor soldiers (n = 1) the measurements were 2.68, 1.08, and 0.79 mm of head length, head width, and pronotum width, respectively. This has not been collected from structures in Venezuela. Constantino (2002) reports that H. tenuis is a minor pest of structures and a major pest of agriculture in some locations in South America.

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Table 1. Localities and Distribution of Heterotermes tenuis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map number</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Altitude (m)</th>
<th>Longitude/Latitude</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Los Cerritos</td>
<td>Aragua</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>10°27'N/67°35'W</td>
<td>Secondary forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Canoabo</td>
<td>Carabobo</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>10°17'N/67°35'W</td>
<td>Plantation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Maturín</td>
<td>Monagas</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>8°41'N/62°45'W</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chaguaramas</td>
<td>Monagas</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>8°20'N/62°30'W</td>
<td>Pines forest (Pinus caribaea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>El Peñón</td>
<td>Sucre</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10°26'N/62°30'W</td>
<td>Secondary forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Parupa</td>
<td>Bolívar</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>4°30'N/60°50'W</td>
<td>Plains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>El Paují</td>
<td>Bolívar</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4°28'N/61°35'W</td>
<td>Plains</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1. Distribution of Heterotermes tenuis in Venezuela.
SUMMARY

The termite *Heterotermes tenuis* (Hagen) is reported from Venezuela for the first time. Specimens were found at several localities in the country including near the coast at the north of the country, and places near Gran Sabana at the south near the Brazilian frontier. The species was collected at different altitudes and habitat.

REFERENCES CITED


