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# A new species of *Mephritus* Pascoe from Ecuador (Coleoptera, Cerambycidae, Cerambycinae, Elaphidiini)

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## Keywords:

Coleoptera;	<i>hovorei</i> ;
Cerambycidae;	taxonomy;
Elaphidiini;	new species;
Longhorned Woodboring	morphology;
Beetles ;	Ecuador;
<i>Mephritus</i> ;	neotropical region.

**Abstract.** – *Mephritus hovorei* sp. nov. is described from Napo, Ecuador. Discussion of morphological variation and similarity to other species in the genus is provided.

Santos-Silva A. & Lingafelter S. W., 2021. – A new species of *Mephritus* Pascoe from Ecuador (Coleoptera, Cerambycidae, Cerambycinae, Elaphidiini). *Faunitaxys*, 9(28): 1 – 4.

ZooBank: <http://zoobank.org/3DF26916-2243-4B98-BDE2-A0F594231237>

## Introduction

The genus *Mephritus* was proposed by Pascoe (1866: 479) on the basis of *M. cinerascens* (Lucas, 1859) which was later determined to be a synonym of *M. amictus* (Newman, 1841). The genus was characterized and distinguished from *Sphaerion* and other related genera by having compressed and strongly carinate tibiae; metatibia without spines "...absence of a true spine to the hinder pair"; antennae fimbriate ventrally; antennomeres III–V deeply sulcate; and elytra terminating in a median spine ("...absence of a true spine to the hinder pair" (replaced, however, by a broad angular process) cut off this genus from all its allies.").

Over the next 150 years, 22 additional species have been described or transferred into *Mephritus* (Monné 2021). Napp and Martins (1982) revalidated *Mephritus* (at that time in the synonym of *Nephalius* Newman 1841), and provided a key to species of the genus. Martins (2005) reviewed the South American species (at that time, 14 species). All 23 species occur in South America, and only *M. apicatus* (Linsley, 1935) occurs from Mexico to northern South America.

As with many moderate to large genera of Cerambycidae, this growth has made it difficult to apply the original generic concept over all the current members. Photographs of most of the primary types and other specimens currently placed in *Mephritus* are available on Bezark (2021).

We describe herein a new species of *Mephritus* from Napo, Ecuador, collected by the late Frank Hovore and Richard Penrose and provided to us by Ian Swift. This species, *Mephritus hovorei*, new species (first record of the genus for Ecuador), has notably less clavate meso- and metafemora than most others in the genus, however it is quite similar in proportions to *M. apicepullus* Galileo and Martins (2011).

## Material and Methods

Photographs were taken in the MZSP with a Canon EOS Rebel T3i DSLR camera, Canon MP-E 65 mm f/2.8 1-5X macro lens, controlled by Zerene Stacker AutoMontage software. Measurements

were taken in "mm" using measuring ocular Hensoldt/Wetzlar - Mess 10 in the Leica MZ6 stereomicroscope, also used in the study of the specimens.

The acronym used in the text is as follows:

– MZSP: Museu de Zoologia, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.

## Results

### *Mephritus hovorei* sp. nov.

(Fig. 1-8)

ZooBank: <http://zoobank.org/33229BED-51CA-4B48-B180-239CFBCA8D28>

**Holotype**, ♀: ECUADOR, Napo: Jatun Sacha Biological Reserve, 09-16.IX.1998, F.T. Hovore & R. Penrose leg. (MZSP).

### Description of the holotype.

**Coloration.** – Head mostly dark brown, almost black; anteclypeus dark yellowish brown; labrum dark brown, almost black posteriorly, dark yellowish brown anteriorly; mandibles and mentum dark brown, almost black; ligula reddish brown with central area dark brown; palpi dark brown except reddish brown narrow apical region; antennae orangish brown. Prothorax dark brown, almost black. Ventral surface of meso- and metathorax, and scutellum dark brown. Elytra dark brown basally, laterally, and entire apical quarter; remaining surface opaque, orangish brown. Legs orangish brown. Abdominal ventrites dark brown.

**Head.** – Frons finely, shallowly, somewhat rugose-punctate; with minute, sparse, decumbent yellowish setae. Vertex finely, densely punctate; area between eyes and prothorax slightly convex; with minute, sparse, decumbent yellowish setae. Area behind upper eye lobes with sculpturing and setae as on vertex, except a few long, erect, yellowish-white setae close to eye. Area behind lower eye lobes smooth, glabrous superiorly close to eye, somewhat coarsely, abundantly punctate, glabrous superiorly close to prothorax, slightly rugose, with a few long, erect brownish setae on remaining surface close to eye, coarsely striate-punctate. Genae finely, partially confluent punctate close to eye, smooth apically; with minute, decumbent yellowish setae close to eye, glabrous on smooth area. Apex of last maxillary and labial palpomeres moderately expanded. Mandibles strongly curved anteriorly, not forming distinct tooth on



base of the curvature; outer surface coarsely longitudinally striate except smooth anterior area; with short, decumbent, sparse golden setae, and long decumbent setae of same color interspersed, except glabrous smooth area. Wide central area of postclypeus slightly elevated toward frons, finely, densely punctate (slightly more rugose close to frons); with minute, decumbent yellowish pubescence not obscuring integument, sparser toward frons, and one long, golden seta on each side near anteclypeus; sides minutely, densely punctate, glabrous. Labrum almost horizontal, not coplanar with anteclypeus posteriorly, inclined, concave anteriorly; horizontal area finely, somewhat abundant punctate, with short yellowish-brown pubescence not obscuring integument, and long, erect golden setae directed forward laterally; anterior margin with fringe of yellowish setae. Gulamentum smooth glabrous close to prothorax; wide anterior area between eyes opaque, somewhat rugose-punctate (surface minutely, densely micropunctate), with short, decumbent yellowish pubescence not obscuring integument, and long, erect setae of same color interspersed; intermaxillary process elevated. Distance between upper eye lobes 0.24 times distance between outer margins of eyes; in frontal view, distance between lower eye lobes 0.44 times distance between outer margins of eyes; upper eye lobes with six rows of ommatidia. Antennae 1.8 times elytral length, reaching elytral apex at basal quarter of antennomere IX. Scape finely, abundantly punctate; with yellowish-white pubescence not obscuring integument, and long, erect, sparse yellowish-white setae interspersed on apical half, setae slightly longer ventrally. Pedicel with sculpturing, pubescence and erect setae as on scape. Antennomeres III–V distinctly longitudinal carinate dorsally; antennomere III with short spine with blunt apex at inner apex; antennomeres IV–VI with short spine with acute apex at inner apex; antennomere VII with acute spicule at inner apex; antennomeres with yellowish-white pubescence not obscuring integument; antennomeres III–VIII with long, erect yellowish-brown setae ventrally, gradually shorter and sparser toward VIII; dorsal apex of antennomeres III–X with long, erect yellowish-brown setae apically; antennomeres IX–X with a few long, erect yellowish-brown setae at ventral apex.

Antennal formula based on length of antennomere III (excluding apical spine):

– Scape = 0.57. – Pedicel = 0.17. – IV = 0.86. – V = 0.95. – VI = 0.97. – VII = 1.04. – VIII = 0.86. – IX = 0.86. – X = 0.75. – XI = 0.84.

**Thorax.** – Prothorax slightly longer than wide (including lateral tubercles); posterior margin slightly wider than anterior one; lateral tubercles conical, with blunt apex, placed about middle; sides with somewhat small, rounded tubercle near to anterior margin. Pronotum widely, transversely depressed on anterior quarter; with one rounded tubercle on each side of anterior third, with elongate, arched tubercle on each side, from about middle to posterior constriction (gradually more elevated toward posterior region), and elongated, subelliptical, smooth gibbosity centrally, from about middle to posterior constriction; area between tubercles and central gibbosity coarsely, abundantly punctate; punctures on anterior region and between lateral tubercles and sides coarse, distinctly sparser than centrally; posterior region, finely, sparsely punctate; surface with grayish-white pubescence not obscuring integument, except glabrous central gibbosity; with long, erect, sparse yellowish-brown setae interspersed. Sides of prothorax coarsely punctate before middle, except finely transversely striate area close to anterior margin (striate area distinctly widened toward prosternum), mostly smooth on posterior half; with abundant grayish-white pubescence not obscuring integument, except almost glabrous striate anterior area. Prosternum coarsely, sparsely punctate on central region of posterior half, smooth on sides of posterior half, transversely striate on anterior half; with dense grayish-white pubescence not obscuring integument on posterior half, and sparse pubescence on anterior half. Narrowest area of prosternal process 0.25 times procoxal width. Procoxal cavities widely open posteriorly, closed laterally. Ventral surface of meso- and metathorax with abundant grayish-white pubescence not obscuring integument; metathoracic discrimen well-marked. Mesoventral process without apical projections toward mesocoxae; apex widely emarginate. Scutellum with grayish-white pubescence not obscuring integument.

**Elytra.** – Coarsely, abundantly punctate on anterior 3/4, punctures distinctly finer and sparser on posterior quarter; with long spine at outer apex, with minute projection at sutural angle; with abundant grayish-white pubescence not obscuring integument, and long, erect, moderately abundant yellowish-brown setae interspersed.

**Legs.** – Profemora subfusiform; meso- and metafemora slightly pedunculate-clavate (femoral club not abruptly expanded); apices rounded; sides not carinate; with minute, abundant grayish-white pubescence not obscuring integument, and long, erect, sparse yellowish-brown setae interspersed (part of them brownish basally). Tibiae carinate laterally; with minute grayish-white pubescence not obscuring integument, and long, erect, abundant yellowish-brown setae interspersed, erect setae more abundant and more brownish toward metatibiae. Metatarsomere I about as long as II–III together; metatarsomere V shorter than II–III together.

**Abdomen.** – Ventrites with dense grayish-white pubescence partially obscuring integument, and long, erect, sparse golden setae interspersed; apex of ventrite V subrounded.

#### **Dimensions** (mm).

- Total length, 19.50;
- Prothoracic length, 3.05;
- Anterior prothoracic width, 2.20;
- Posterior prothoracic width, 2.40;
- Maximum prothoracic width, 2.90;
- Humeral width, 3.95;
- Elytral length, 13.85.

**Etymology.** – We dedicate this species to Frank Hovore who collected the holotype along with his friend and colleague, Richard Penrose.

**Remarks.** – *Mephritus*, apparently, is not a monophyletic genus. Comparing the type species, *Mephritus cinerascens* Pascoe, 1866 (currently synonym of *M. amictus* (Newman, 1841)) with the new species, and also with at least some other species currently included in it, it is possible to see considerable morphological differences. For example, outer margin of the mandibles with or without distinct tooth, shape of the prothorax, from transverse to longitudinal, elytral apex with long outer spine or not, femora strongly and abruptly clavate or not, etc. For now, we prefer to describe the new species in *Mephritus*, while a complete revision of the genus is not done. Due to these inconsistencies, some features usually attributed to the genus were used in the description of the species, trying to facilitate an eventual future revision.

Among the species of *Mephritus*, *M. hovorei* sp. nov. is distinctly similar to *M. apicepullus* Galileo & Martins, 2011 (see photograph on Bezark 2021), but differs as follows:

- scape orangish brown;
- prothorax dark brown, almost black;
- scutellum dark brown;
- elytra dark brown anteriorly, laterally, and entire posterior quarter;
- remaining surface opaque, orangish brown.

In *M. apicepullus*:

- scape is dark brown (originally described as black, but appears not so in the photograph of the holotype),
- prothorax orangish brown,
- scutellum orangish brown,
- elytra orangish brown with posterior quarter dark brown (originally described as black, but appears not so in the photograph of the holotype).

Unfortunately, the original description of *M. apicepullus* does not provide detailed information that would allow comparing other differential characters or, in a few cases, it is not possible



**Fig. 1-8.** *Mephritus hovorei* sp. nov., holotype, ♀.

1) Dorsal habitus. 2) Ventral habitus. 3) Lateral habitus. 4) Head, dorsal habitus. 5-8) Inner apical spine of antennomeres. 5) III. 6) IV. 7) V. 8) VI.



**Fig. 9-11.** *Mephritus flavipes* (Gounelle, 1909), dorsal habitus, ♀.

9) Specimen 1. 10) Specimen 2. 11) Specimen 3.

to confirm the information in the available photograph of the holotype.

Although *Mephritus flavipes* (Gounelle, 1909), a species known from the east and central Brazil, is morphologically different from *M. hovorei* **sp. nov.**, we believe it is appropriate to illustrate it by showing the chromatic elytral variation. In *M. flavipes*, the dark lateral band may be absent (Fig. 9), weakly marked (Fig. 10), or well-marked (Fig. 11).

Therefore, it is possible that the same type of variation also occurs in *M. hovorei* **sp. nov.**, which differs from *M. flavipes* (Fig. 9–11) as follows:

- body distinctly slender (stouter in both sexes of *M. flavipes*);
- spine of the basal antennomeres (Figs 5–8) distinctly shorter (longer in both sexes of *M. flavipes*);
- distance between upper eye lobes 2.5 times width of one upper lobe (from 3.5 to 4.0 times in *M. flavipes*);
- femora (Figs 1–3) slender (stouter in both sexes of *M. flavipes*).

## Acknowledgments

We thank Ian Swift for sending and donating the holotype to the MZSP collection. We also express our sincere thanks to Francisco Eriberto de Lima Nascimento (MZSP) who took the photographs of the specimens of *M. flavipes*. We greatly appreciate reviews of this manuscript by Eugenio Nearn, Norman Woodley, and Juan Pablo Botero.

## Résumé

Santos-Silva A. & Lingafelter S. W., 2021. – Une nouvelle espèce du genre *Mephritus* Pascoe d'Equateur (Coleoptera, Cerambycidae, Cerambycinae, Elaphidiini). *Faunitaxys*, 9(28): 1 – 4.

*Mephritus hovorei* **sp. nov.** est décrit de Napo, Equateur. Une discussion, sur les variations morphologiques et la similitude avec d'autres espèces du genre *Mephritus*, est fournie.

Mots clés. – Coleoptera, Cerambycidae, Elaphidiini, longicorne, *Mephritus*, *hovorei*, taxonomie, nouvelle espèce, morphologie, Equateur, région néotropicale.

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A new species of *Mephritus* Pascoe from Ecuador (Coleoptera, Cerambycidae, Cerambycinae, Elaphidiini).

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**Illustration de la couverture** : Brazil, Maranhão, Barreirinhas, Preguiças River.

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