

# Spercheidae

## (Coleoptera)

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### Abstract

*Spercheus platycephalus* MACLEAY, 1825 (Coleoptera: Spercheidae) is the only species of this family known from New Caledonia. It has not been recorded in New Caledonia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its recent rediscovery (2001, 2007) in New Caledonia is reported.

**Key words:** Coleoptera, Hydrophiloidea, Spercheidae, rediscovery, New Caledonia.

### Introduction

The Marist missionary Javier X.H. Montrouzier [also known as Montrousier] (1820–1897) collected one specimen of the genus *Spercheus* LEACH on the New Caledonian main island Grande Terre. This specimen was later described under the name *S. mulsanti* by PERROUD & MONTROUSIER (1864). Nineteen years later, FAUVEL (1883) listed two additional New Caledonian records. In 1926 *S. mulsanti* was synonymized with the wide-spread *S. platycephalus* MACLEAY, 1825 (see ORCHYMONT 1926).

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *Spercheus platycephalus* was not collected in New Caledonia at all and it was thought to be extinct in that Archipelago. In the “World Catalogue of Insects” (HANSEN 1999) New Caledonia was not even mentioned under the distribution of *Spercheus platycephalus*.

After 127 years, new records are here reported from New Caledonia, based on specimens collected by M. Balke & G. Wewalka in 2001, and by R. Dobosz & M. Wanat in 2007.

All specimens examined are deposited in the following collections:

MNHW            Museum of Natural History, Wrocław University, Poland; M. Wanat

NMW            Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna, Austria

### *Spercheus platycephalus* MACLEAY, 1825

*Spercheus platycephalus* MACLEAY 1825: 35; ORCHYMONT 1926: 202.

*Spercheus platycephalus* MAC LAY[!], 1825: ORCHYMONT 1926: 202.

*Spercheus platycephalus* MAC LEAY[!], 1825: KNISCH 1921<sup>1</sup>: 60; HEBAUER 1997: 19.

*Spercheus platycephalus* MACLEAY, 1825: ORCHYMONT 1937: 154; BALFOUR-BROWNE 1945: 109, 115.

*Spercheus mulsanti* PERROUD & MONTROUSIER 1864: 81; FAUVEL 1883: 351; ORCHYMONT 1926: 202 (syn.).

*Spercheus mulsanti* PERROUD [& MONTROUSIER], 1860: KNISCH 1921<sup>1</sup>: 60; ORCHYMONT 1937: 154.

*Spercheus mulsanti* PERROUD & MONTRIEUX[= MONTROUSIER!], 1860: HEBAUER 1997: 19.

TYPE LOCALITIES: *Spercheus platycephalus*: Indonesia (Java); *S. mulsanti*: New Caledonia (Canala).

<sup>1</sup> not 1919, as in HEBAUER (1997: 20)



Fig. 1: Habitus of *Spercheus platycephalus*.

**MATERIAL EXAMINED (New Caledonia):**

**NORTH PROVINCE:** 3 exs. (MNH): “NEW CALEDONIA (N) 20°25.2’S 164°13.3’E Nehoue river, 15 m 8.01.2007 public camp site night coll. (lamp & beating) leg. M. Wanat & R. Dobosz”.

**SOUTH PROVINCE:** 1 ex. (MNH): “NEW CALEDONIA (S) 21°44.2’S 165°53.8’E Pocquereux (IAC Station) 4.01.2007 30 m at light leg. M. Wanat & R. Dobosz”; 1 ex. (NMW): Dumbéa, 50 m a.s.l., swamp at road to upper course of River Dumbéa, 4.XI.2001, leg. M. Balke & G. Wewalka. Swampy area and inundated forest, larger shaded pools on red clay, with thick leaf layers, some reeds (Loc. 2001/NC 4, see JÄCH & BALKE 2010: Fig. 8).

**DIAGNOSIS:** Among all New Caledonian water beetles, *Spercheus platycephalus* is recognized easily by the combination of size (ca. 4 mm length), highly convex body form, anteriorly emarginate head, laterally crenulate pronotum, and the presence of one pair of conspicuous elongate elytral tubercles (Fig. 1).

**TAXONOMIC REMARKS:** The taxonomy of *Spercheus platycephalus* has not been clarified satisfactorily. African specimens (currently regarded as *S. p. ssp. interruptus* FAIRMAIRE) differ to some extent morphologically from the Oriental/Australian ones. DNA sequence data would certainly help to elucidate the taxonomic status of the populations.

**DISTRIBUTION (Fig. 2):** *Spercheus platycephalus* s.l. is widely distributed in the Afrotropical Region, in the Oriental Region (from Sumatra to Sulawesi), and in the Australian Region (Australia, New Guinea, New Caledonia, Tonga). The record for Malaysia by HEBAUER (1997: 19) is probably based on a confusion of Malaysia and Indonesia (see e.g. HEBAUER 1997: 21: “Malaysia: N. Sumatra, ...”).



Fig. 2: Geographical distribution of *Spercheus platycephalus* in New Caledonia.

In New Caledonia, this species is rather widely distributed on Grande Terre. FAUVEL (1883) recorded it from Nouméa, Île de Nou (near Nouméa), and Canala.

HABITAT: This species lives in stagnant water (see JÄCH & BALKE 2010: Fig. 8).

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