

## ABSTRACT

### PHYLOGEOGRAPHY OF *TAPINOMA SESSILE* IN CALIFORNIA

The ant *Tapinoma sessile* (Say) 1836 is the most widely distributed ant in North America and yet has received very little attention from biologists apart from its ability to infest houses. The original species description does not adequately describe the phenotypic variation present in this species of typically concolorous darkly colored ant. In California there is a bicolored morph, the species status of which is in question. Comparative morphometric analysis indicates that the bicolored morphs are consistently distinguishable across a range of characters. Allometric techniques conclusively demonstrate that these two morphs are not the same species. Molecular markers chosen for this study were not variable enough to provide resolution at the species level. Based on the integrated analysis of morphological and molecular data it was concluded that the bicolored form is not *T. sessile* and is a species new to science.

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