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Eutrombicula (E.) poppi, a new Chigger from a Sea Snake[1]

(ACARINA, TROMBICULIDAE)

By P. H. VERCAMMEN-GRANDJEAN

ABSTRACT

A slide labelled *Trombicula wichmanni* in the collection of the museum of Munich has been recognized as a new species of *Eutrombicula*. It was collected on a sea snake of the Oriental region and is characterized by diploid genualae on the legs, showing the formula 6.2.2 instead of the usual 3.1.1. The new species is called *Eutrombicula (Eutrombicula) poppi*.

At the beginning of 1970 Dr. Egon POPP, of the Zoologische Staatssammlung, Abt. Wirbellose Tiere, München, sent me a slide numbered V. 2140 and labelled *Trombicula wichmanni* Oudemans, 1905. The host was a "*Platurus*", and the slide was mounted in Brussels in 1930.

What kind of "*Platurus*" could have been the host? Was it any kind of snake with its tail flattened vertically? Or was it the genuine sea snake *Pelamis platurus*? Considering the ecology of the latter, its parasitism by a terrestrial trombiculid would be almost unthinkable. The presence of such a terrestrial trombiculid would be less surprising on sea snakes that live part of their life ashore, as do the members of the genus *Laticauda*. It is well known that several representatives[2]) of the genus *Eutrombicula* parasitize snakes, but none of these snakes are sea dwellers.

Dr. G.-F. DE WITTE, of the Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, Brussels, considers that the host of the controversial trombiculid could have been a *Laticauda*, as many representatives of that genus entered into the collections of the Royal Museum of Natural History of Brussels before and during 1930[3]). Thus, the host was most likely a *Laticauda* sp. and the place of origin, Malaysian seas, or more widely, the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

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[1]) This work was supported by Research Grant AI-03793 from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Public Health Service.

[2]) *E. alfreddugesi, E. splendens, E. goeldii, E. hirsti.*

[3]) In a letter dated 26 August 1970, Dr. DE WITTE specifies the following locations and dates of capture: Aru Island (Arafura Sea) (DUTCH NEW GUINEA), 24-III-1929; Triton Baai (DUTCH NEW GUINEA), 20-II-1929; Mansuar Island (DUTCH NEW GUINEA), 10-XI-1879; Bay of Manila (PHILIPPINES), before 1930.

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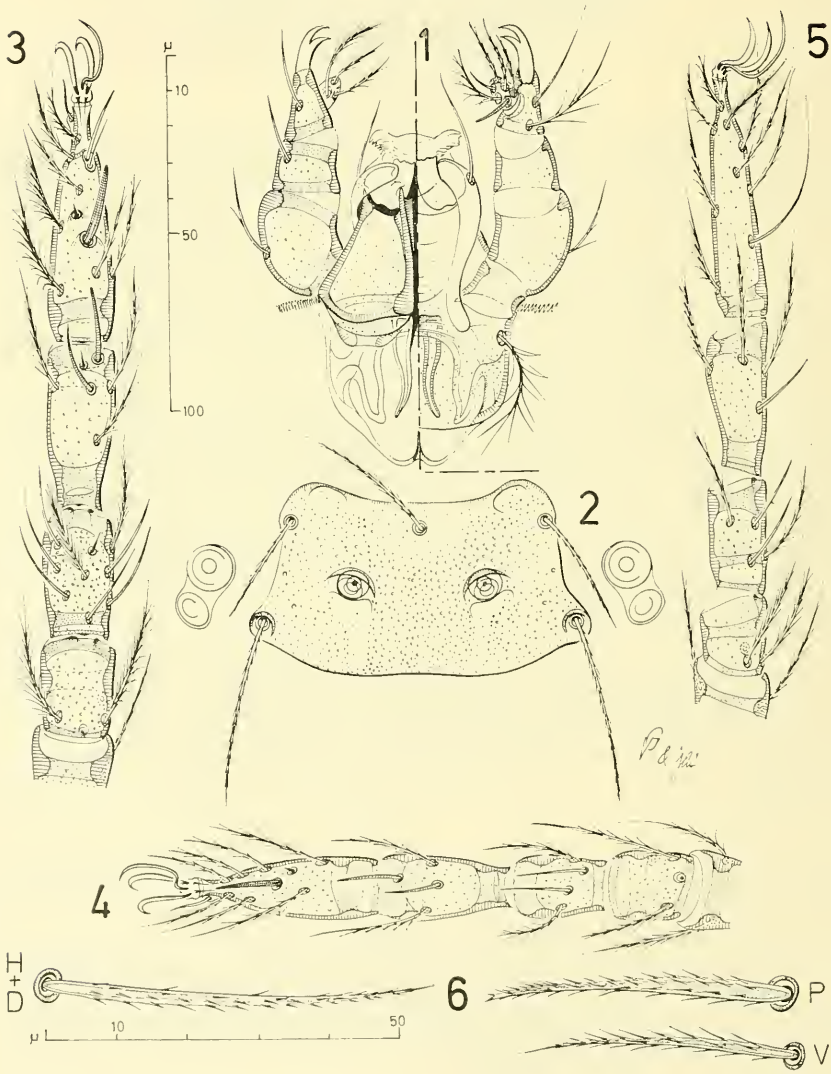
The study of this unique specimen led me to conclude that it is quite unlike *Eutrombicula wichmanni,* which is larger and stronger. In addition, the most surprising feature of this trombiculid is the presence of diploid genualae on the 3 legs, ga = 6, gm = 2, and gp = 2; the formula for these is 3.1.1 in all the other known *Eutrombicula.*

I want to honor my friend and colleague, Dr. Egon POPP, in naming this new species after him:

Eutrombicula (Eutrombicula) poppi



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Eutrombicula (Eutrombicula) poppi n. sp.
(Figs. 1—6)

1. ECOLOGICAL DATA.

Host: ? *Laticauda* sp.
PT: ?
Loc.: Malaysian seas, Pacific and Indian Oceans.
Date: ? 1930.
Type material: Holotype and unique specimen in Zoologische Staatssammlung, Abt. Wirbellose Tiere, München (WEST GERMANY).

2. BIONOMICAL DATA.

SIF = 7B.S-N-2-6221.1000 fPp = (B)-(N)-(N).N.B
(ST, pST, PT', PT'') = nude fsp = 7/7/7
fCx = 1/1/1 fSt = 2/2 fBT = b/b/b
fD = 2H + 6.6.2.2 = 18 } NDV = 18 + 14 = 32
fV = 2.4.2u4.2 = 14 }

AW	PW	SB	ASB	PSB	SD	AP	AM	AL	PL
72	88	37	29	25	54	29	50	36	54

S	H	D	P	V	pa	pm	pp	Ip
—	54	51/46	44	38/54	294	260	286	840

3. REMARKS.

The two chelostyles unfortunately broken near base, and sensillae also missing. Slender and thoroughly nude mastitarsala on leg III about 52 μ long. Scutal and dorsal body setae tapering characteristically. Paired eyes (diameter 12 and 10 μ).

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