Caponiidae: *Cubanops*

Distinctive group of relatively small species known only from the West Indies. The genus currently counts 11 extant species, but probably the real number is greater. Although the records of *Cubanops* are only from the Bahama Islands, Cuba, and Hispaniola, a few females juvenile specimens sharing the somatic characters of the genus have been taken on St. John. They do appear to belong to the genus, however, suggesting that *Cubanops* probably occurs in Puerto Rico as well as the Virgin Islands. New collecting in Puerto Rico and Lesser Antilles are needed.

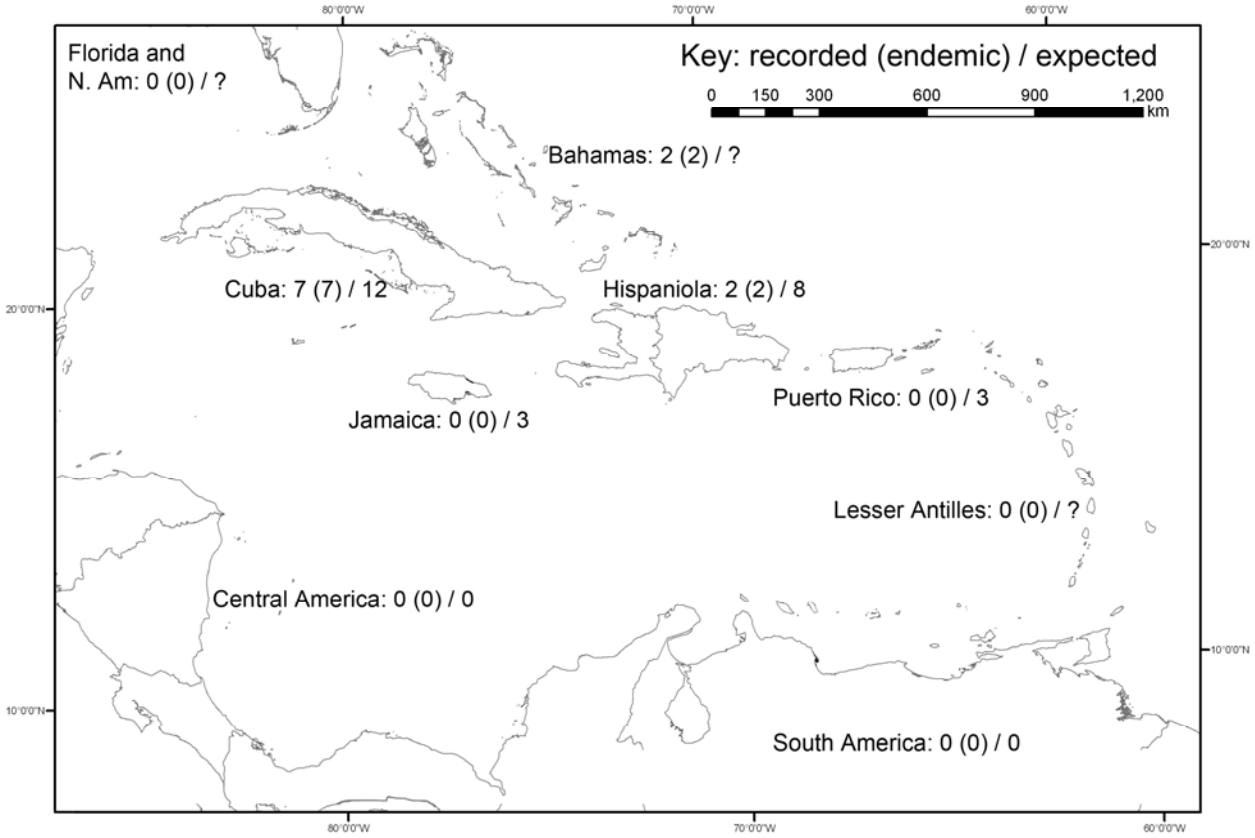

Fig. 1. Richness of *Cubanops* species, extracted from Platnick (2011). The islands of Trinidad, Tobago, Margarita, Tortuga, Bonaire, Curaçao and Aruba are considered part of South America.

Monophyly. *Cubanops* is a nopinae genus (subsegmeted tarsi). These West Indian spiders show two other unusual leg characters that are often found in nopine genera (Platnick, 1995: figs. 6–11). The anterior metatarsi bear a translucent ventral keel, and there is a translucent ventral extension of the membrane separating the anterior metatarsi and tarsi. However, these species differ from the other nopines with these leg modifications in having a distinctively patterned carapace, a greatly widened labium, and bisegmented metatarsi IV. Two species groups are recognized within the genus. In the ludovicorum group, the embolus is relatively short and wide and the female receptaculum is relatively low. In the alayoni group, the embolus is relatively long and narrow and the female receptaculum is relatively high (see Sánchez-Ruiz, *et al*. 2010)

Amber species. None known.

Dispersal. Dispersal capabilities in *Cubanops* are low, as in the rest of Caponiidae genera. At the moment, all species are endemic of its origin islands.

Search strategy. Most species are very small (2-10 mm body length), and are very difficult to finding in the nature. They are wandering hunters, preferably found at ground level, under stones, *Agave´s* plants, in leaf litter or in the soil. There are two useful methods to collect these spiders: 1) intensive search on the microhabitat were they live, and 2) use the Berlese-sampler.

Similar genera. Easy to confuse in the field with *Tarsonops* from Mexico and Cuba; but it is necessary to observe carefully the distinctively patterned carapace.

Needed collecting. The main gaps of knowledge are in Hispaniola, Jamaica, Puerto Rico and Bahamas. Cuba needs new collecting. Should be included Lesser Antilles and Florida in order to know the limits of *Cubanops* distribution.

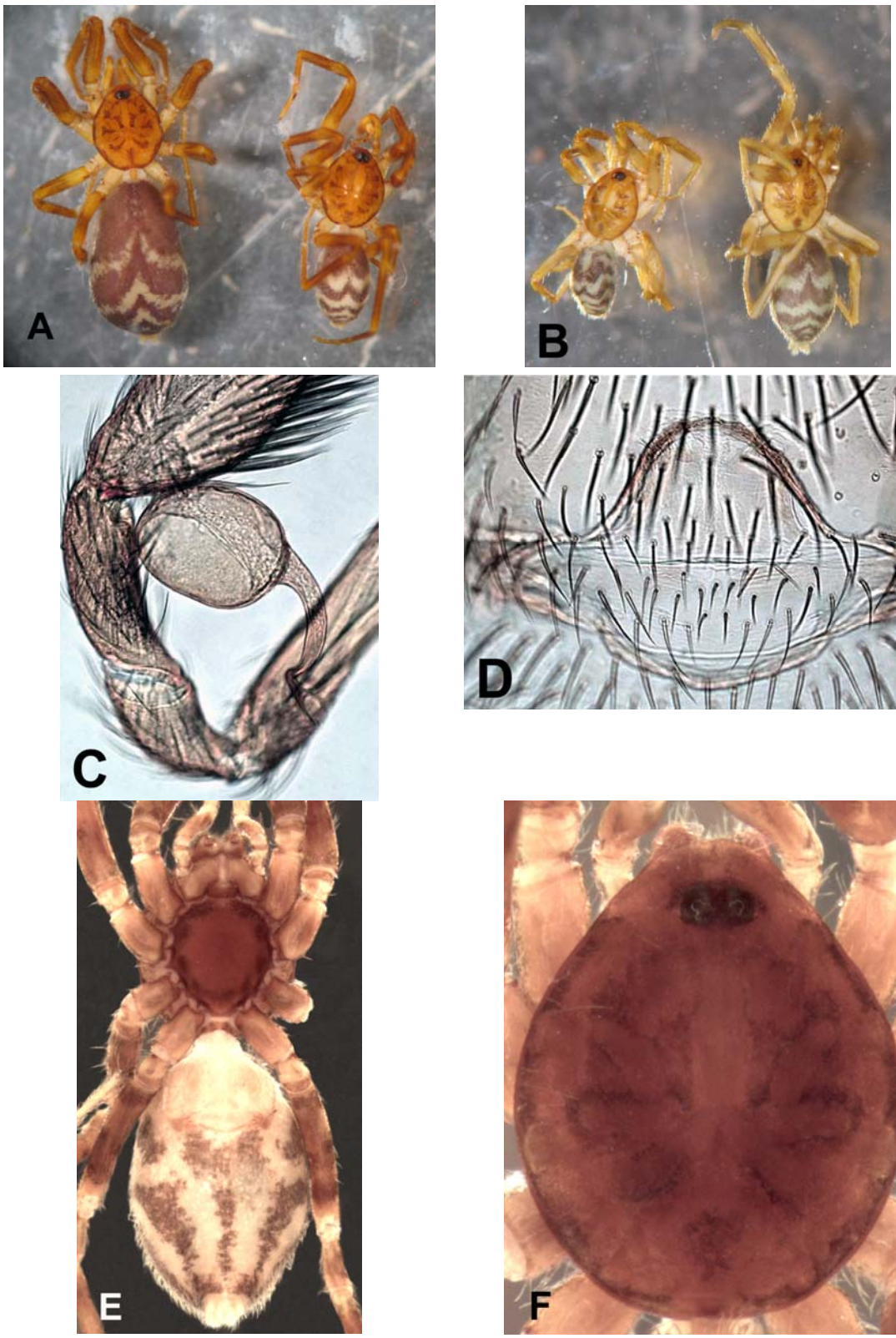

Fig. 2. A. Female (left) and male (right) of *Cubanops alayoni* Sánchez-Ruiz, Platnick & Dupérré, 2010. B. Female (right) and male (left) of *Cubanops terueli* Sánchez-Ruiz, Platnick & Dupérré, 2010. C-D. *Cubanops granpiedra* Sánchez-Ruiz, Platnick & Dupérré, 2010, bulb and embolus, prolateral view (C); internal genitalia, ventral view (D). E-F. *Cubanops darlingtoni* (Bryant, 1948), ventral view (E); carapace (F). Photos C,D,E,F by Nadine Dupérré.

References

Platnick, N.I. 1995. A revision of the spider genus *Orthonops* (Araneae, Caponiidae). American Museum Novitates 3150: 1–18.

Platnick, N. I. 2011. The world spider catalog, version 11.5. American Museum of Natural History, online at http://research.amnh.org/iz/spiders/catalog.

Sánchez-Ruiz, A., N. I. Platnick, N. Dúperré. 2010. A new genus of the spider family Caponiidae (Araneae, Haplogynae) from the West Indies. American Museum Novitates, 3705: 1-44.