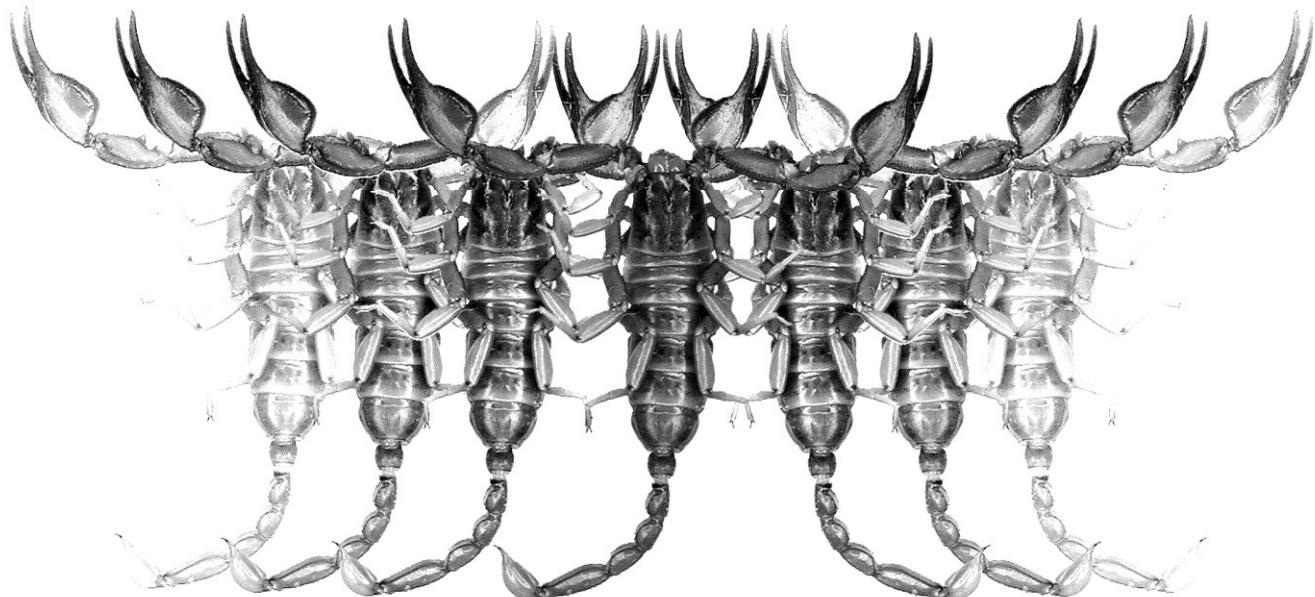


# *Euscorpius*

Occasional Publications in Scorpiology



Scorpions of Ethiopia. Part IV. Genus *Uroplectes* Peters, 1861  
(*Scorpiones: Buthidae*)

František Kovářík, Graeme Lowe, David Hoferek, Jana Plíšková  
& František Šťáhlavský

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# *Euscorpius*

## Occasional Publications in Scorpiology

EDITOR: Victor Fet, Marshall University, ‘fet@marshall.edu’  
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## Scorpions of Ethiopia. Part IV. Genus *Uroplectes* Peters, 1861 (Scorpiones: Buthidae)

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<http://zoobank.org/urn:lsid:zoobank.org:pub:AE9EEC2B-8D5B-4699-B9CE-595C26EB9C1B>

### Summary

All data about the distribution of *Uroplectes fischeri* (Karsch, 1879) in Ethiopia and Somalia are summarized. *U. fischeri* is fully illustrated with color photos of habitus and locality. *Uroplectoides abyssinicus* Lourenço, 1998 is discussed and synonymized with *U. fischeri*. Genus *Uroplectoides* Lourenço, 1998 is synonymized with *Uroplectes* Peters, 1861. Hemispermatophore of *U. fischeri* was extracted and illustrated for the first time. In addition to morphological analysis we also describe the karyotype of male *U. fischeri* from Ethiopia ( $2n=28$ ).

### Introduction

In the years of 2011–2015, two of the authors (FK and JP) have had an opportunity to participate in expeditions to the Horn of Africa, study scorpions at 69 Ethiopian localities and publish several articles on this fauna (Kovařík, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2013, 2015; Kovařík & Lowe, 2012; Kovařík & Mazuch, 2011, 2015; Kovařík et al., 2013, 2015). This paper is the fourth in a series of articles concerning the distribution of a particular genus in Ethiopia (Horn of Africa) (Kovařík, 2015; Kovařík et al., 2015; Kovařík & Mazuch, 2015).

*Uroplectes* Peters, 1861 is an African genus which is found from central to southern parts of Africa. The Ethiopian and Somalian localities of *Uroplectes fischeri* (Karsch, 1879) represent the eastern and northern limits of the distribution of this genus.

### Methods, Material & Abbreviations

Nomenclature and measurements follow Stahnke (1971), Kovařík (2009), and Kovařík & Ojanguren Affonso (2013), except for trichobothriotaxy (Vachon, 1974), and sternum (Soleglad & Fet, 2003).

Specimens studied herein are preserved in 80% ethanol. Depositories: FKCP (František Kovařík, private collection, Prague, Czech Republic); MZUF (Museo di Storia Naturale dell’Università di Firenze, sezione di zoologia “La Specola”, Florence, Italy); ZMHB (Museum für Naturkunde der Humboldt-Universität, Berlin,

Germany); ZMUH (Zoologisches Institut und Zoologisches Museum, Universität Hamburg, Germany).

### Systematics

Family **Buthidae** C. L. Koch, 1837

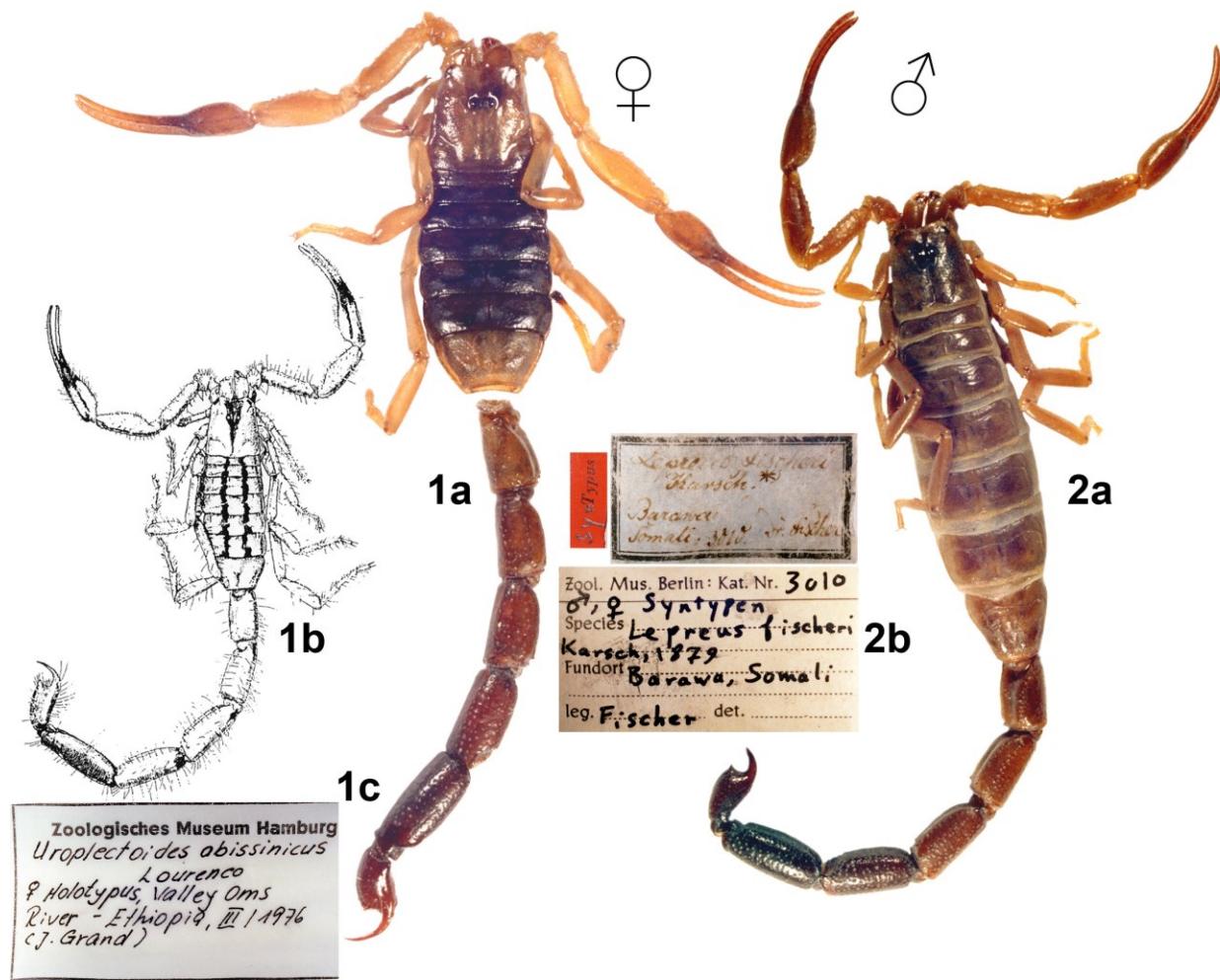
Genus ***Uroplectes*** Peters, 1861  
(Figs. 1–46, Table 1)

*Uroplectes* Peters, 1861: 512; Fet & Lowe, 2000: 266 (complete reference list until 1998); Kovařík, 2009: 31.

- = *Lepreus* Thorell, 1876: 7 (type species *Lepreus pilosus* Thorell, 1876: 7) (syn. by Kraepelin, 1908: 256).
- = *Tityolepreus* Kraepelin, 1891: 232 (type species *Tityus chinchoensis* Karsch, 1879b: 370) (syn. by Kraepelin, 1895: 79, 87).
- = *Scorpiobuthus* Werner, 1939: 361 (type species *Scorpiobuthus apatris* Werner, 1939: 361) (syn. by Fet & Sissom, 1997: 408).
- = *Uroplectoides* Lourenço, 1998: 313 (type species *Uroplectoides abyssinicus* Lourenço, 1998: 313)  
**Syn. n.**

TYPE SPECIES. *Uroplectes ornatus* Peters, 1861 (= *Uroplectes flavoviridis* Peters, 1861)

DIAGNOSIS. Medium sized buthids, adults 30–60 mm in length. Sternum *type I*, subtriangular in shape. Pedipalps

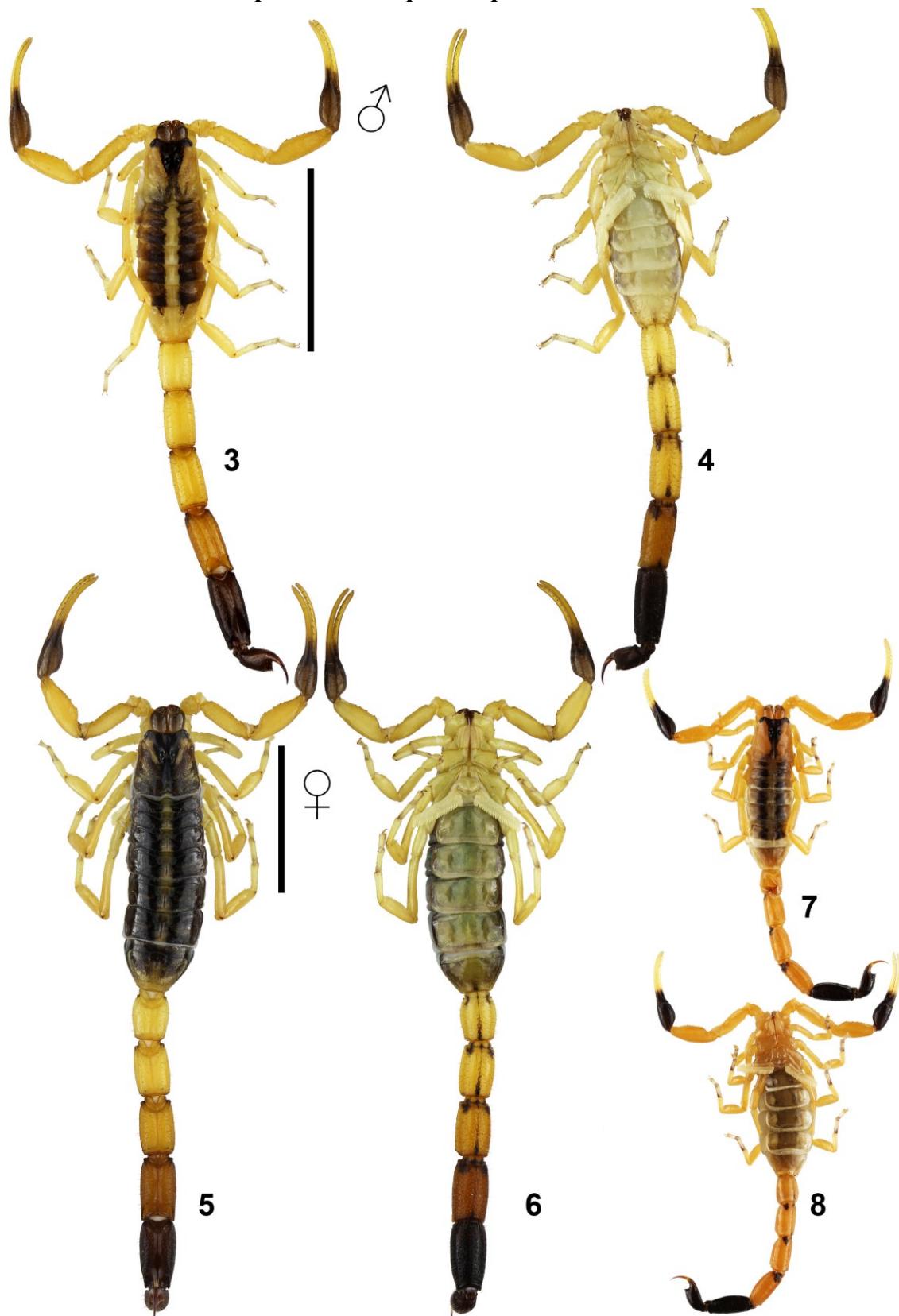


**Figures 1–2:** **Figure 1.** Holotype female of *Uroplectoides abyssinicus* Lourenço, 1998, dorsal view (1a), specimen drawn as the female holotype in the original description (1b, fig. 1 in Lourenço, 1998: 310), and original label (1c). **Figure 2.** Lectotype male of *Uroplectes fischeri* (Karsch, 1879), dorsal view (2a) and original labels (2b).

orthobothriotaxic,  $\alpha$ -configuration, femur trichobothrium  $d_2$  dorsal, patella trichobothrium  $d_3$  external to DM<sub>c</sub> carina. Pectines with fulera. Median denticle (MD) row of pedipalp chelal finger arranged in oblique groups. Chelicerae with typical buthid dentition, fixed finger smooth, lacking denticles on ventral surface. Tergites I–VI with one or three carinae. Carapace without distinct carinae. Metasoma elongate. Telson with or without subaculear tooth. Legs III and IV with well developed tibial spur.

**COMMENTS.** We examined the female holotype of the type species *Uroplectoides abyssinicus* Lourenço, 1998 from ZMUH, which is the only known specimen of this species. We found that the female holotype is definitely different from the specimen illustrated as the female holotype in the original description (Figs. 1a–1b, and fig. 1 in Lourenço, 1998: 310). Several years ago, the first author (FK) discussed this problem with H. Dastych, curator at ZMUH, who excluded the possibility of the

specimen being mislabeled. The identity of the specimen which we studied and photographed (Fig. 1a) was thus confirmed to be the holotype of *Uroplectoides abyssinicus*. We suggest that the published figure of the holotype female (Fig. 1b) is an error and actually represents the male of another species, maybe from the *Uroplectes vittatus* "complex". Morphometrics of the body and metasomal segments in that figure differ from those of the holotype. Also, the metasoma of the holotype is bent backward, not forward as illustrated in the figure. The narrower body of the illustrated scorpion suggests that it is a male, not a female. Another striking difference is that the holotype shows no trace of the median dark stripe on the carapace and paired dark stripes on the tergites drawn in the figure. Study of the holotype of *Uroplectoides abyssinicus*, lectotype and paralectotype of *Uroplectes fischeri*, and our additional new specimens from Ethiopia reveals that all of these specimens represent the same species, i.e. *Uroplectes fischeri* (= *Uroplectoides abyssinicus* syn. n.). Here we also synon-



**Figures 3–8:** *Uroplectes fischeri* from locality 14EI, Ethiopia, Somali State, Liben region, between Filtu and Dolo Odo, 04°50'07.5"N 40°55'13.5"E, 912 m a.s.l.. Male dorsal (3) and ventral (4) views, female her mother dorsal (5) and ventral (6) views (scale bar 1-cm), and juvenile 17 mm long in dorsal (7) and ventral (8) views.



**Figures 9–20:** *Uroplectes fischeri* from locality 14EI, Ethiopia, Somali State, Liben region, between Filtu and Dolo Odo, 04°50'07.5"N 40°55'13.5"E, 912 m a.s.l. Male, pedipalp chela, dorsal (9), and external (10), and telson lateral (20) view. Female, pedipalp chela, dorsal (11), external (12), and ventral (13) views. Pedipalp patella, dorsal (14), external (15), and ventral (16) views. Pedipalp femur and trochanter dorsal (17) view. The trichobothrial pattern is indicated in Figures 12a–15a, 17a. Pedipalp movable finger (18) and telson lateral (19) views.

ymize the genera *Uroplectes* Peters, 1861 and *Uroplectoides* Lourenço, 1998. The genus *Uroplectoides*, nominally containing two species (*U. abyssinicus* and *U. emiliae*) was based on the simple conjunction of 3 character states (concave anterior margin of carapace, metasoma with carinae weak and surface smooth with punctuations, telson with strong subaculear tooth) that are actually expressed to varying degrees in other species of *Uroplectes*. This synthetic approach can lead to polyphyletic or paraphyletic groupings. Although we suspect that *Uroplectes* may indeed contain more than one monophyletic lineage that could comprise additional genera, their composition is still unclear and it will be necessary to study more species and perform detailed

comparative analyses of characters to define these clades. From a nomenclatural perspective, Lourenço (1998) also ignored three generic names already synonymized under *Uroplectes*. The type species for two of those genera, *Tityolepreus* Kraepelin, 1891 (type species *Tityus chinchoensis* Karsch, 1879 = *Uroplectes occidentalis* Simon, 1876) and *Scorpiobuthus* Werner, 1939 (type species *Scorpiobuthus apatris* Werner, 1939 = *Uroplectes chubbi* Hirst, 1911) appear to belong to the same species group as the type species of *Uroplectoides* and they share characters cited in the diagnosis of *Uroplectoides*. Hence, these names have precedence over *Uroplectoides*.



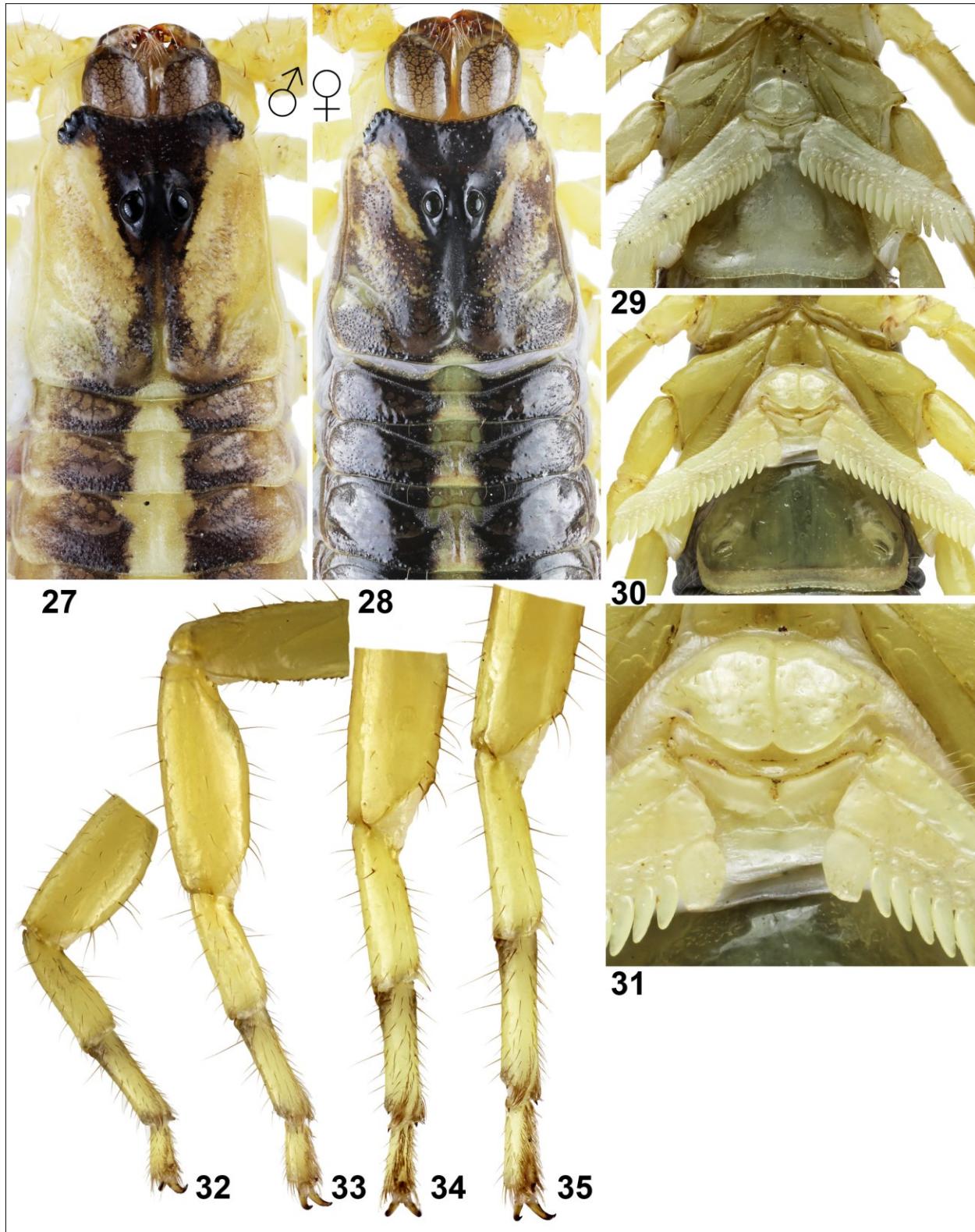
**Figures 21–26:** *Uroplectes fischeri* from locality 14EI, Ethiopia, Somali State, Liben region, between Filtu and Dolo Odo,  $04^{\circ}50'07.5''\text{N}$   $40^{\circ}55'13.5''\text{E}$ , 912 m a.s.l. Male, metasoma and telson, lateral (21), ventral (22), and dorsal (23) views. Female, metasoma and telson, lateral (24), ventral (25), and dorsal (26) views.

***Uroplectes fischeri*** (Karsch, 1879)  
(Figs. 1–46, Table 1)

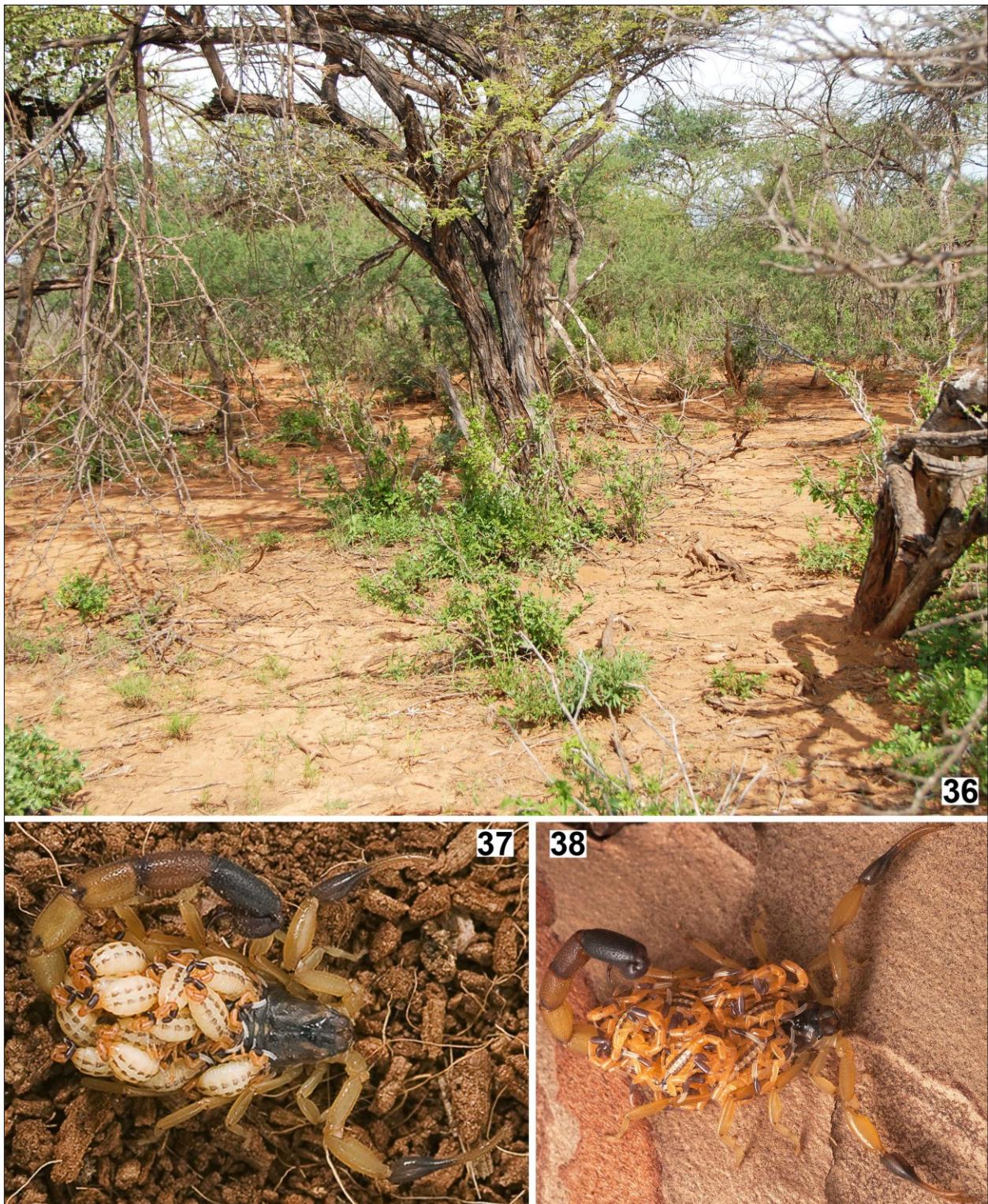
*Lepreus fischeri* Karsch, 1879a: 124–125.

*Uroplectes fischeri*: Pocock, 1896: 387–388; Kraepelin, 1903: 566; Lamoral & Reynders, 1975: 527 (in part); Fet & Lowe, 2000: 268–269 (in part, complete reference list until 2000); FitzPatrick, 2001: 192–193; Kovařík, 2003: 145–146, fig. 6; Kovařík & Whitman, 2005: 113.

- = ? *Tityus tricolor* Simon, 1882: 59 (syn. by Kraepelin, 1899: 57).
- = *Uroplectes fischeri caporiacoi* Fet, 1997: 247, replacement name for *Uroplectes fischeri intermedius* Caporiacco, 1941: 35 (preocc. by *Uroplectes intermedius* Tullgren, 1907: Scorpionida) (syn. by Kovařík, 2003: 145–146).
- = *Uroplectes patrizii* Caporiacco, 1936: 137–140, fig. 2 (syn. by Kovařík, 2003: 145–146).



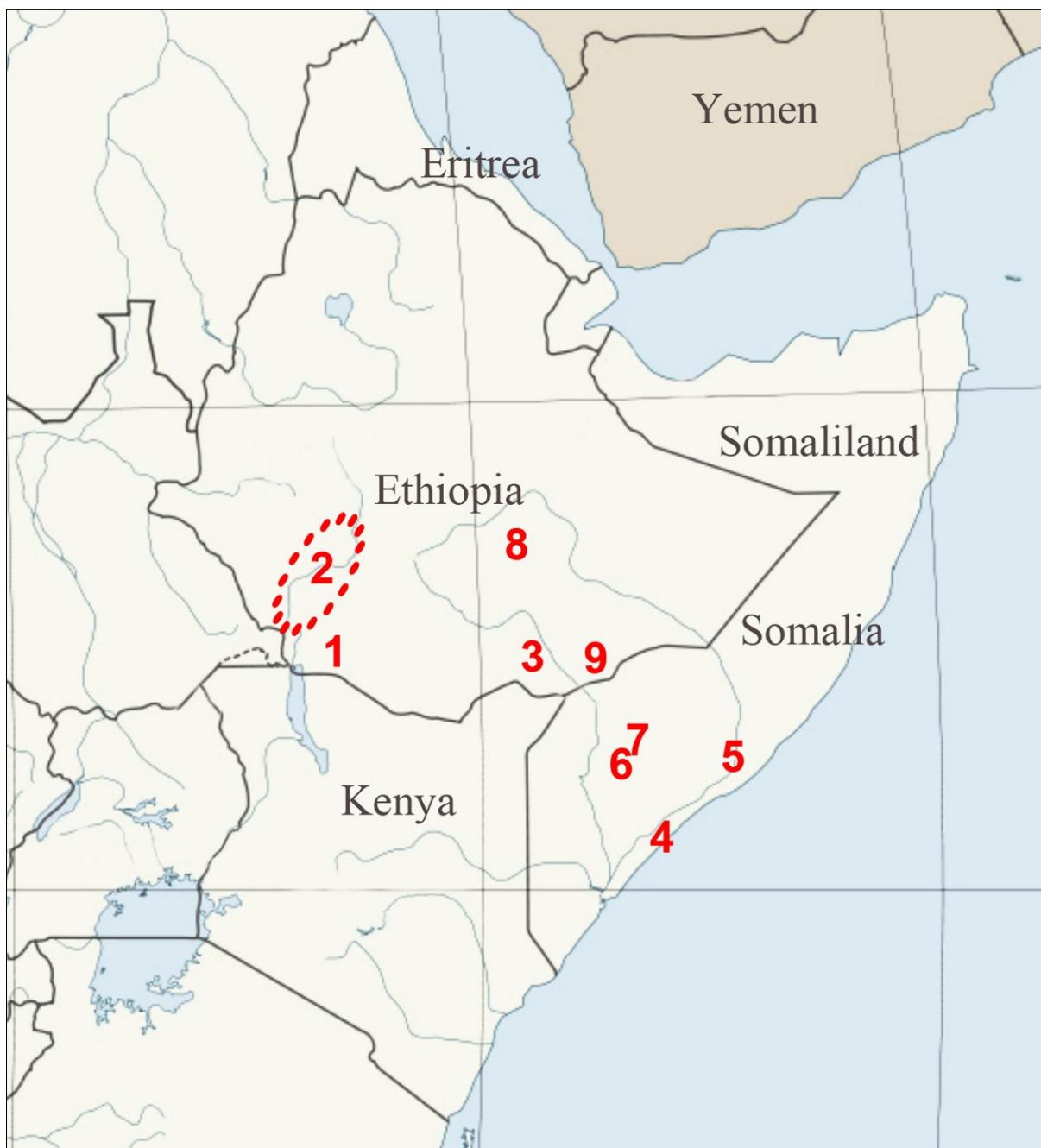
**Figures 27–35:** *Uroplectes fischeri* from locality 14EI, Ethiopia, Somali State, Liben region, between Filtu and Dolo Odo,  $04^{\circ}50'07.5''\text{N}$   $40^{\circ}55'13.5''\text{E}$ , 912 m a.s.l. Male, chelicerae, carapace and tergites I–III (27), and sternopectinal region and sternite III (29). Female, chelicerae, carapace and tergites I–III (28), and sternopectinal region (31) include sternite III (30), distal segments of legs I–IV (32–35), retro-lateral view.



**Figures 36–38:** *Uroplectes fischeri*, locality 14EI (36), Ethiopia, Somali State, Liben region, between Filtu and Dolo Odo, 04°50'07.5"N 40°55'13.5"E, 912 m a.s.l. (see also fig. 120 in Kovařík et al., 2015: 27), female with newborn before first ecdysis (37) and female with 16 juveniles after first ecdysis (38) from the locality.



**Figures 39–40:** *Uroplectes fischeri*, female at the locality 14EI (39) and male (40), her son.



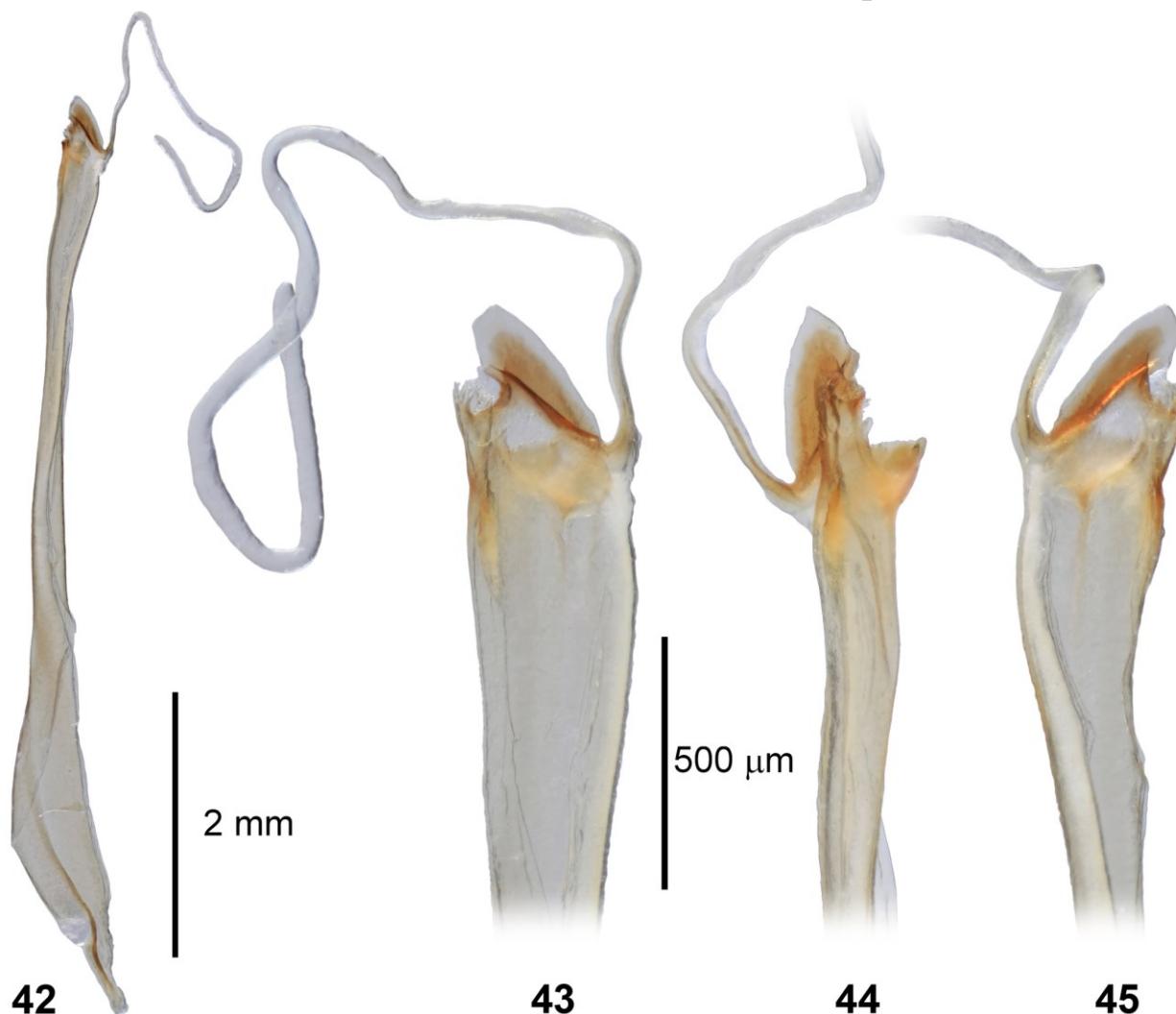
**Figure 41:** Map showing the distribution of *Uroplectes fischeri* in Ethiopia (1–3, 8–9) and Somalia (4–7). The specimens from localities 1–7 were examined by the first author (see "material examined" section); the localities 8–9 are cited by Kraepelin (1903: 566). 1. El Dire, type locality of *Uroplectes fischeri caporiaccoi* Fet, 1997, replacement name for *Uroplectes fischeri intermedius* Caporiacco, 1941. 2. Region of the Omo River valley, type locality of *Uroplectoides abyssinicus*. 3. Somali State, Liben region, between Filtu and Dolo Odo, 04°50'07.5"N 40°55'13.5"E, 912 m a.s.l. (locality No. 14EI, Fig. 36). 4. Barawa, type locality of *Uroplectes fischeri*. 5. Villaggio Duga degli Abruzzi. 6. Bur Dinsor. 7. Edain Caboba. 8. Ginir (II.-III.1901, 1♂ 2♀, ZMUH). 9. Ganale (III.1901, 1♂, ZMUH).

= *Uroplectoides abyssinicus* Lourenço, 1998: 313–315, figs. 1–6 (in part); Fet & Lowe, 2000: 277; Kovařík, 2003: 148. **Syn. n.**

*Uroplectes vittatus* (in part): FitzPatrick, 2001: 191–192.

TYPE LOCALITY AND TYPE DEPOSITORY. Somalia, Barawa, ZMHB No. 3010.

MATERIAL EXAMINED. **Ethiopia.** Missione Biologica Sagan-Omo, El Dire (04°59'N 37°07'E), 21.V.1939, 1♀ (holotype of *Uroplectes fischeri caporiaccoi* Fet, 1997, replacement name for *Uroplectes fischeri intermedius* Caporiacco, 1941), leg. E. Zavattari, MZUF No. 1153; region of the Omo river Valley, 1♀, III.1976 (holotype



**Figures 42–45:** Left hemispermophore of *Uroplectes fischeri* from Ethiopia (locality 14EI). Views of entire hemispermophore in dorsal aspect (42), and capsule region in dorsal (43), ental (44) and ventral (45) aspects (axes referenced to in situ position of hemispermophore within animal).

of *Uroplectoides abyssinicus*) (Fig. 1), leg. J. Grand, ZMUH No. A55/98; Somali State, Liben region, between Filtu and Dolo Odo, 04°50'07.5"N 40°55'13.5"E, 912 m a.s.l. (Fig. 36, locality No. 14EI), 1♀ (Figs. 5–6, 11–19, 24–26, 28, 30–35, 37–39), 1juv. (Figs. 7–8), 20.XI.2014, leg. F. Kovařík and P. Kučera, 2♂1♀ (Figs. 3–4, 9–10, 20–23, 27, 29, 40, offspring of the female from locality No. 14EI, bred by D. Hoferek), FKCP. **Somalia**, Barawa (01°11'N 44°02'E), 1♂1♀ (lectotype, Fig. 2, and paralectotype of *Uroplectes fischeri*), leg. Fischer, ZMHB No. 3010; Villaggio Duga degli Abruzzi, 2♀, V.1928, MZUF No. 833; Bur Dinsor, 3.VI.1978, 1juv., MZUF No. 831; Edain Caboba, 18.VI.1978, 1♀, MZUF No. 832.

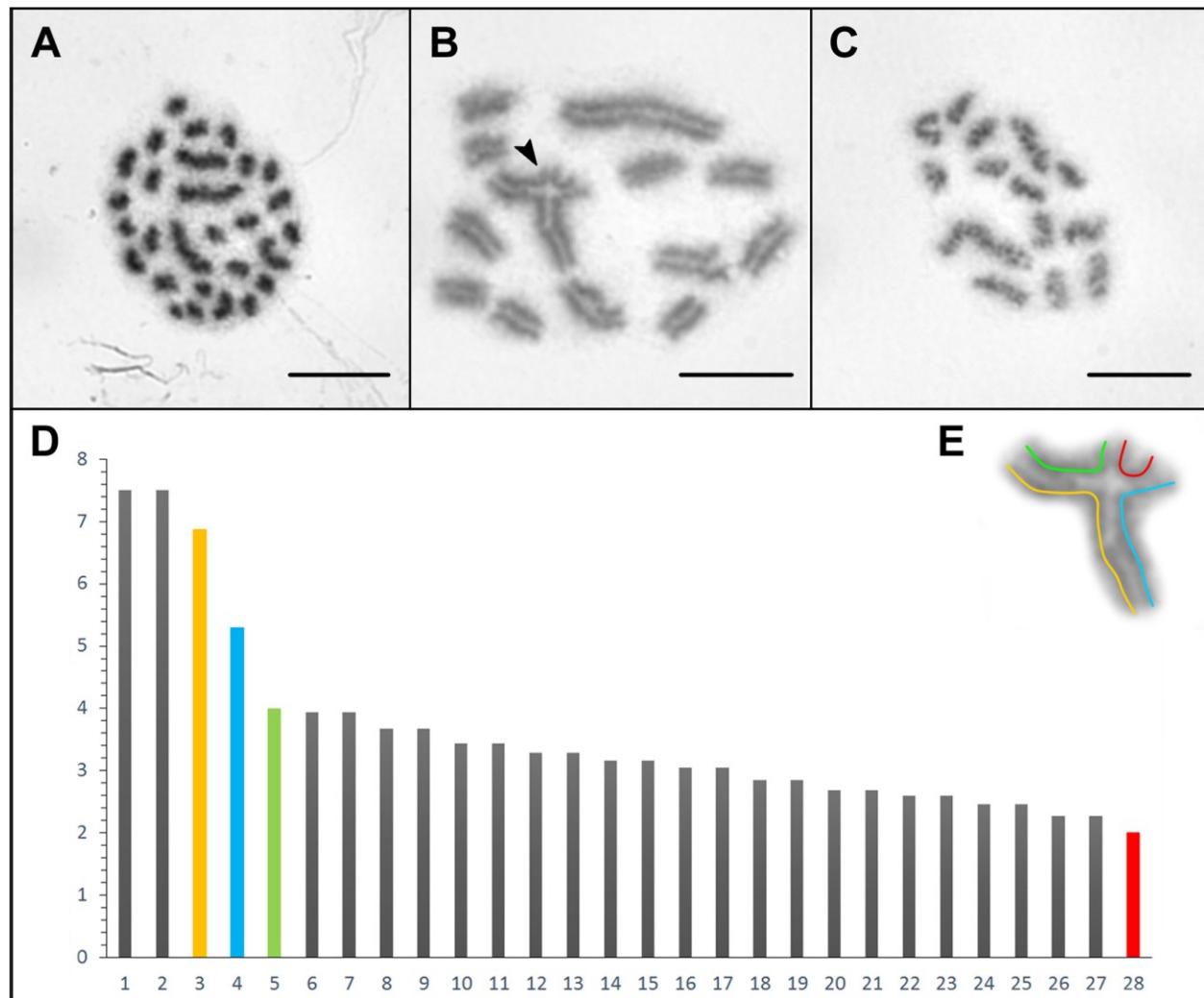
**DIAGNOSIS.** Total length 37–50 mm. Chelicerae yellow, strongly reticulate. Pedipalp movable fingers with 11 principal rows of denticles and apical row of four to five

denticles; every row (except last one) has one internal and two external granules. Metasomal segments II–V punctate with dorsal carinae indicated, other carinae absent. Carapace with dark triangular marking. Telson setose with distinct subaculear tubercle. Female with basal pectinal tooth wide, oval, but not markedly longer than other pectinal teeth (Fig. 31). Adult males with segments of pedipalp and metasoma narrower than in female; ratio metasomal segment I length to width 1.45–1.56 in male, 1.2–1.4 in females; ratio metasomal segment V length to width 2.03–2.35 in male, 1.5–1.8 in females; fingers of pedipalps straight in both sexes. Pectines with 15–20 teeth in both sexes.

**HEMISPERMATOPHORE.** (Figs. 42–45) Trunk long, narrow, basally broadened. Flagellum relatively short, with pars recta shorter than pars reflecta. Capsule region with several lobe structures: a median lobe at the base of the

Ecdyses Chronological Data for <i>Uroplectes fischeri</i> – Ethiopia, locality No. 14EI					
Ecdyses	first	second	third	fourth	fifth
Date*	18.II.2015	26.III.2015	25.V.2015	8.VII.2015	28.VIII.2015
Male* 1	7	43	103	147	198
Male 2	7	46	107	154	226
Female	7	51	112	165	283
Days (average)	7	46.6	107.3	155.3	235.6

**Table 1:** Ecdyses data for three juvenile siblings *Uroplectes fischeri*. Chronological data are presented in number of days. The males and the female were reared through fifth instars. \* refers to male 1 only.



**Figure 46:** Chromosomes of male of *Uroplectes fischeri* from Ethiopia (locality 14EI). A) spermatogonial metaphase ( $2n=28$ ); B) postpachytene, arrowhead shows tetravalent; C) one sister metaphase II ( $n=14$ ); D) Idiogram based on postpachytene, y axis – % of the relative diploid set, colored chromosomes form tetravalent; E) tetravalent with colored single chromosomes. Bar=10µm.

flagellum, an ental lobe with incised, tufted or crown-like distal margin, and a prominent, dorsally projecting, hook-like basal lobe. These lobes are weakly sclerotized, indicating that the hemispermatophore may not be fully formed. The overall shape of the hemispermatophore and its lobes are consistent with that reported by Vachon

(1950: 18, figs. 19–21) for *U. occidentalis* Simon, 1876, and by Lamoral (1979: 526, figs. 32–33) for *U. otjimbinguensis* (Karsch, 1879). These authors applied somewhat different terminologies. Vachon distinguished both an inner and median lobe, which seem to be part of the same structure that we collectively termed the median

lobe (= inner lobe of Lamoral). The tufted ental lobe corresponds to the external lobe of Vachon (= outer lobe of Lamoral). Our basal lobe corresponds to the same labeled structure of Vachon (= median lobe of Lamoral).

KARYOTYPE (Fig. 46). We analysed one male from Ethiopia (locality No.14EI) using standard cytogenetic methods (e. g. Kovařík et al., 2009). The chromosome complement of this specimen consists of 28 chromosomes (Fig. 46A). The chromosomes form two groups according to their size. The first four chromosomes are distinctly larger than all other chromosomes. They form 7.51 % to 5.30 % of the diploid set. The subsequent chromosomes gradually decrease in size from 4.00 % to 2.00 % of the diploid set (see Fig. 46D). Chromosomes exhibit typical holocentric organization without localised centromere region and possess achiasmatic behaviour during meiosis. These particular features are typical for the family Buthidae (e. g. Mattos et al., 2013). We further detected a distinct tetravalent in all observed post-pachytene nuclei (Fig. 46B). Despite the existence of this multivalent association, all analysed metaphases II exhibited the same number of chromosomes ( $n=14$ ; Fig. 46C). The holocentric nature of chromosomes probably guarantees their equal split into sister metaphases II. In detail, observed multivalent is composed of four chromosomes possessing strikingly different size (Figs. 46D, 46E).

DISTRIBUTION. Ethiopia, ?Kenya, Somalia.

COMMENTS ON LOCALITY. The female and juvenile were collected under bark on the locality 14EI (Fig. 36) during daytime (temperature 34.6 °C and 38% humidity). In addition to *Uroplectes fischeri*, the first author (FK) recorded *Babycurus subpunctatus* Borelli, 1925, *Hottentotta trilineatus* (Peters, 1861), *Parabuthus cf. liosoma* (Ehrenberg, 1828), and two very common species of *Pandinus* at this locality.

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