

**Nest occurrence, mean nest density and relative nest abundance of *Aneuretus simoni* Emery and associated ant fauna in Meethirigala Forest Reserve**

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The sole extant species of Aneuretinae, *Aneuretus simoni*, forms ground nests in various substrates in several forests in Sri Lanka. Nests of the species were surveyed outside the previously recorded habitats, in Meethirigala Forest Reserve, in Gampaha District. A preliminary survey conducted in the forest by placing honey baits, breaking of decaying wood pieces and sifting leaf litter in February, 2014 revealed the presence of workers of *A. simony* in the area. The frequency of nest occurrence (FNO), percentage nest abundance (NA%) and mean nest density (MND) of each ant species observed at three localities in three elevations of the forest were investigated in March, 2014 by laying 40 quadrats of 0.5 m x 0.5 m at two 50 m<sup>2</sup> plots in each locality. Number of nests occupied by each ant species within each quadrat was recorded. Air temperature (28°C - 29°C), soil temperature (25.3°C - 26.3°C), soil moisture content (6.0 % - 13.3 %), depth of litter (4 cm - 6 cm) and soil organic matter content (5.18 % - 11.3%) were also recorded. Nests of twenty one species of fourteen genera in five subfamilies including that of *A. simoni* were observed. Nests of *A. simoni* were found at the locality at 57m elevation, the highest value of FNO, 5/40 and 12.5% of NA were observed for the species and also MND of *A. simoni*, 0.5 m<sup>-2</sup>, was the highest value recorded among that of other species. Higher values of FNO were observed for *Odontomachus simillimus* Smith and *Technomyrmex albipes* Smith, respectively while *A. simoni* had 5/120 of FNO for the whole study region. The Meethirigala Forest Reserve in Gampaha District should be added to the list of habitats of the species and *A. simoni* is a resident species at 57 m elevation, which is the lowest elevation record for the species.