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The genus *Platynectes* Régimbart, 1879 in Laos, with the description of a new species (Coleoptera, Dytiscidae)

by **Michel Brancucci**

Abstract. The genus *Platynectes* Régimbart, 1879 is here recorded for the first time from Laos, where its occurrence is discussed on the basis of the currently available material. In total, 2 species belonging to the subgenus *Gueorguievtes* Vazirani, 1976 are recognized: *Platynectes major* Nilsson, 1998, and the species described here as new, *Platynectes njai* sp.nov. A modification of ŠŤASTNÝ's (2003) key is provided.

Key words. Coleoptera – Dytiscidae – *Platynectes* (*Gueorguievtes*) – new species – Laos

Introduction

Since Laos is now open for entomologists, a good number of localities have been visited and have been more or less well collected. Special attention has been paid to the mountainous regions. Only a few specimens of the genus *Platynectes* Régimbart, 1879 are available, but among them I found a new species, the description of which is given below. This is the first record of the genus *Platynectes* in Laos.

Material

The material examined in this study is deposited in the Natural History Museum of Basel, Switzerland (NHMB).

Taxonomy

Platynectes (Gueorguievtes) njai sp.nov. (Figs 1–4)

Type material. Holotype ♂: "LAO-NE, Hua Phan prov., Phu Phan Mt., ~20°12′N 104°01′E, 1500–1900m, 17.V.–3.VI.2007, M. Brancucci". (NHMB)

Description. Body oval, flattened, dark brown to black with testaceous markings on the whole surface (Fig. 1).

Head testaceous, dark brown on posterior part, particularly behind and beside eyes, and with two light brown spots on vertex. Reticulation consisting of medium-sized polygonal meshes, irregular in size and incomplete, with 1–2 small punctures on their inner sides, seldom more. Row alongside eyes, clypeal grooves and grooves beside eyes well impressed, punctures medium-sized and strongly confluent. Antennae ferrugineous-brown, joints elongate, the fifth 2.7 time as long as broad.

Pronotum testaceous, shining, with an anterior and a posterior dark brown band. Anterior band as broad as head and not prolonged on anterior angles; posterior dark brown band wide, covering the whole width. Reticulation consisting of polygonal

Figs 1–4. *Platynectes njai* sp.nov.: 1, habitus; 2–3, aedeagus in lateral view; 4, left paramere.

meshes, irregular in size and often incomplete, particularly on disc; meshes with 1 to 2 minute punctures on their inner surfaces; punctures irregular in size. Latero-basal part with some deep punctures. Longitudinal median suture short but well impressed and distinctly visible. Anterior row of punctures complete; punctures large, mostly not confluent. Posterior row broadly interrupted at middle; punctures large, not in groups, confluent at sides. Lateral margin distinctly bordered; the furrow ending long before anterior angles.

Elytra dark brown to black with one transverse subbasal and eight longitudinal testaceous bands; sutural and lateral longitudinal bands complete, the others formed by a series of dots, the fifth bifurcate anteriorly. Reticulation on anterior half consisting of distinctly impressed, mostly incomplete polygonal meshes, with 1–2 very minute punctures within them and with larger punctures at the intersections, and on the border with numerous meshes. Meshes becoming more complete behind, and small and distinctly polygonal in apical half. Sutural row of punctures with a few distant medium-sized punctures along whole length. Discal and sublateral row of punctures reaching almost to base, punctures medium-sized, irregularly distributed but not really confluent.

Underside black. Prosternal process elongate-oval, broadly bordered along middle part, ending in a sharp point, flattened. Metasternal wings long and narrow. Metacoxae

only superficially structured. Metacoxal process with a deep lateral furrow not reaching metacoxal lines. Metafemora very finely reticulated, with a row of very long setae at distal posterior angles. Metatibiae very finely reticulated with two rows of punctures and setae; both along outer margin, and consisting of numerous setae, small and close together at proximal part, becoming gradually longer distally. Sternites 2, 3 and 4 superficially reticulate with a deep and short row of confluent punctures on disc.

♂. Protarsi and mesotarsi distinctly dilated with numerous rounded pads. Anterior claws equal, slender. Anal sternite roughly sculptured laterally, with about 10 long and strongly impressed wrinkles on both sides of middle and covering posterior 2/3. Middle part smooth, just with some minute punctures. Posterior margin finely bordered, broadly rounded.

Aedeagus, in lateral view, slightly curved, broadened on apical fifth with numerous setae on posterior border of apical part (Figs 2 and 3). Parameres elongate, base oblique (Fig. 4).

♀. Unknown.

Measurements: Holotype, total length = 7.80 mm; total length minus head (TL-h) = 7.20 mm; maximum width (MW) = 4.60 mm; TL-h/MW = 1.56.

Distribution. NE Laos (Hua Phan province).

Derivatio nominis. This is the largest species of the subgenus *Gueorguievtes* Vazirani, 1976, and so I have given it the name of "*njai*" which means "large" in Laotian.

Differential diagnosis. This species undoubtedly belongs to the subgenus *Platynectes* (*Gueorguievtes*) Vazirani, 1976, with eight testaceous longitudinal bands on the elytra. However, it is distinct from all other known species because of its larger size (total length, 7.8 mm). The species that are closest in size are at most 7.0 mm (*P. major* Nilsson, 1998) and 7.2 mm (*P. mazzoldii* Šťastný, 2003). The species is also relatively broad, with a TL-h/MW ratio of 1.56. The broadened apex of the aedeagus is reminiscent of that of *P. hainanensis* Nilsson, 1998 and of *P. mazzoldii*.

Biology. Found in a small pond formed by a small stream at 1800 m in rain forest.

Remarks. The two females from Yünnan (Naturhistorische Museum Wien) cited by Nilsson (1998) are not conspecific with *P. njai* sp.nov. and undoubtedly belong to an additional unknown species.

Platynectes (*Gueorguievtes*) *major* Nilsson, 1998

Platynectes dissimilis major Nilsson, 1998: 114. – Nilsson (2001): 42.
Platynectes major: Šťastný (2003): 233.

Material studied. "Laos: Louangphrabang Prov., Ban Song Cha (5 km W), 20°33–4′N, 102°14′E, 1200 m, 24–30.IV.1999, Vít. Kubáň leg." (4 ex., NHMB); "Laos: Phongsaly Prov., Ban Sano Mai, 21°21′N, 102°03′ E, ~1150 m, 19.–26.V.2004, V. Kubáň" (1 ex., NHMB); "Laos: Hua Phan Prov., Phu Phan Mt., ~20°12′N 104°01′E, 1500–1900m, 17.V.–3.VI.2007, M. Brancucci" (7 ex., NHMB).

Remarks. This species was described by Nilsson (1998) from Vietnam, and has been found to be widely distributed in Thailand and China by the same author and by Šťastný (2003). No specimens were previously known from Laos, and so these are the first

records for this country. *Platynectes major* is undoubtedly widely distributed in Laos, at least at altitudes between 900 and 2100 m. Although much collecting has been carried out from this country, the present study shows that there is still a great deal more to be done.

Modification of ŠŤASTNÝ's key (2003)

8. Median lobe in lateral view markedly bent ventrad in apical 1/5. ... 8a.
– Median lobe in lateral view more or less regularly curved, broadly rounded at apex. ..... ***P. nanlingensis* Šťastný, 2003**

8a. Length: 6.9–7.2 mm. Elytra with subbasal testaceous band broad and not interrupted laterally. ..... ***P. mazzoldi* Šťastný, 2003**
– Length: 7.8 mm. Elytra with subasal testaceous band narrow and interrupted sublaterally. ..... ***P. njai* sp.nov.**

Checklist of species of *Platynectes* recorded from Laos

P. (*Gueorguievtes*) *major* Nilsson, 1998	Luangprabang, Phongsaly, and Hua Phan provinces
P. (*Gueorguievtes*) *njai* sp.nov.	Hua Phan province

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