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Social Wasp Fauna in the Brazilian Amazon: Challenges and Perspectives

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Editorial

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Editorial

The Amazon Rainforest is the biggest biome within Brazilian territory, covering an area of 4,196,943 Km^2. However, many areas lack the most basic studies on biodiversity, particularly in the case of invertebrates. In order to develop any effective conservation proposal, it is first necessary to acquire knowledge about the species that occur in a particular area. Thus, the Brazilian Amazon forest has one of the greatest biodiversity's in the world, including the greatest diversity of social wasps (Vespidae), with Polistinae being the most diverse group among social wasps, with more than 1,000 species described. These wasps play an important role and are important components for complex interactions with other organisms in Neotropical ecosystems.

However, most of the research work was conducted as qualitative inventories of museums, with no particular concern for the collection effort or area explored. Ducke, et al. [1,2] conducted one of the first surveys of wasp fauna in the eastern region of the Brazilian Amazon, mainly in the Pará State. More recently, similar works have been carried out in the Brazilian Amazon, such as in Acre State [3-5], Amapá State [6,7], Amazonas State [6-12], Maranhão State [13], Pará State [14,15], Rondônia State [16], and Roraima State [16,17].

In the Amazon, where social wasps are very diverse, the potential for planned field research seems particularly important. However, there are still many practical impediments, from difficult access to a lack of financial support, so that the vast territory cannot be reasonably covered. Despite the great importance of data from museum collections, planned field inventories are very necessary for the study of various aspects of the diversity of social wasps in the Amazon. Large collection gaps exist in the so-called Amazonian interfluves for which data on social wasps are not available. A great effort must be made to reduce these gaps, as well as to improve the knowledge about the social wasps of the Amazon.

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