

Two new beautiful wasp species of the rare genus *Abernessia*

November 25 2013



This image shows the gorgeous black new wasp species *Abernessia capixaba*.
Credit: Felipe B. Fraga/Cecilia Waichert

Two new beautiful wasp species are added to the rare pompilid genus *Abernessia*, which now contains a total of only four known species. The two new species *A. prima* and *A. capixaba* are believed to be endemic for Brazil alongside the rest of the representatives of the genus. Both wasps are distinguished by the large size (almost 3cm in length) and the beautiful black color with metallic shine typical for the family. The study was published in the open access journal *ZooKeys*.

The enigmatic genus *Abernessia* is part of the spider wasp family Pompilidae. Spider [wasps](#) take their name from the preference of the representatives to parasitize spiders. The females paralyze the prey by stinging it, which is then put in a specifically built nest. The female then lays a single egg on the abdomen of the spider and bury it carefully marking any signs that might give away the nest.

Interestingly it is believed to have a connection between the sizes of prey and size of the offspring of the wasps, the larger wasps are believed to appear from nests containing larger prey.



This image shows a female of *Abernessia giga*, a species that took its name from the impressively large size of the specimen. Credit: Cecilia Waichert

"There is a positive correlation between size of the [spider](#) preyed and size of the wasp produced in the next generation." comments Dr. Waichert, Utah State University.

More information: Waichert C, Pitts JP (2013) Two new species of *Abernessia* Arlé (Pompilidae, Ctenocerinae). *ZooKeys* 353: 77. [DOI: 10.3897/zookeys.353.6223](#)

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