

The first long-haired ones: New wasp group proposed for five new species from India

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A female specimen of the new parasitoid wasp species *Idris brevicornis*. Credit: Dr. Veenakumari Kamalanathan

Long accustomed to parasitising spider eggs, a large worldwide genus of wasps has as few as 24 known representatives in India. However, Dr. Veenakumari, ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, and her team have recently discovered five new species of these interesting wasps from different parts of the country. Because of their

uniqueness and their strong resemblance to each other, as well to aid taxonomic studies they have been considered as constituting a group of their own. The discoveries and the suggestion of 'the first long-haired ones' species group are available in the open-access journal *Deutsche Entomologische Zeitschrift*.

Among the unique features that bring together the new five species, discovered by Drs. Veenakumari Kamalanathan, Prashanth Mohanraj and F. R. Khan, are the long hair-like structures along the margins of both of their wings. This is also the reason behind the authors' choice of naming the proposed group adikeshavus, meaning 'first one to have long hairs' in Sanskrit.

Within this parasitic superfamily of wasps each group has been long accustomed to a specific host. The tribe to which the new five wasp species belong, for instance, is characterised by its exclusive preference for spider eggs. Parallel evolution accounts for the tiny wings of these wasps which allows them to slip through the silk strands of the egg sacs which are deposited in leaf litter by the spiders. Furthermore, all these species have a uniform length of 1 to 2 mm as a result of their getting used to parasitising relatively medium-sized spider eggs.

With over a thousand species supposed to exist in this genus the scientists suggest that their clustering into groups is a necessity to facilitate future studies.

The authors conclude that it is highly likely that this group of [wasps](#) will yield a much larger number of [species](#) of parasitoids attacking spider eggs in India.

More information: Veenakumari Kamalanathan et al. 'The adikeshavus-group': A new species group of Idris Förster (Hymenoptera, Platygasteridae) from India, with descriptions of five new species,

Deutsche Entomologische Zeitschrift (2015). [DOI: 10.3897/dez.62.6219](https://doi.org/10.3897/dez.62.6219)

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