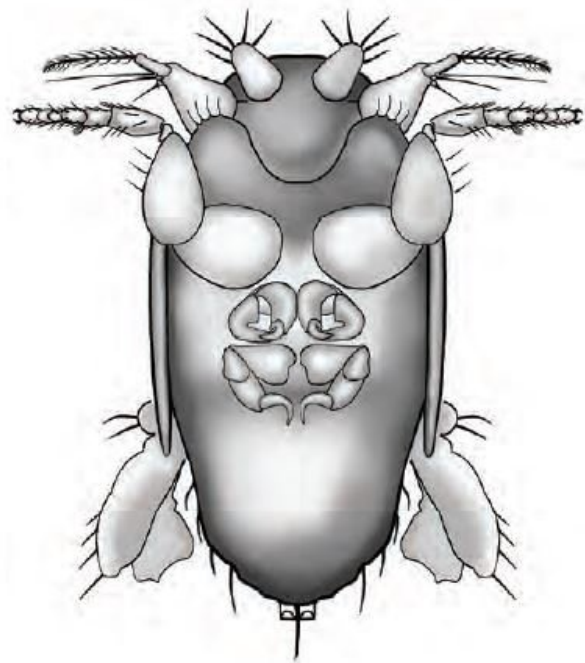


New 'big-armed fly' species named after Arnold Schwarzenegger

January 24 2018



Arnold 'Arnie' Schwarzenegger pictured next to a drawing of his record-breaking minute namesake -- the newly discovered fly species *Megapropodiphora arnoldi*. Credit: Wikimedia Commons (photo) and Tyler Hayden (drawing) .

New species can be named for all types of attributes, but Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County entomologist Brian Brown knew exactly

what name to give a bizarre new fly species he discovered in the Brazilian Amazon.

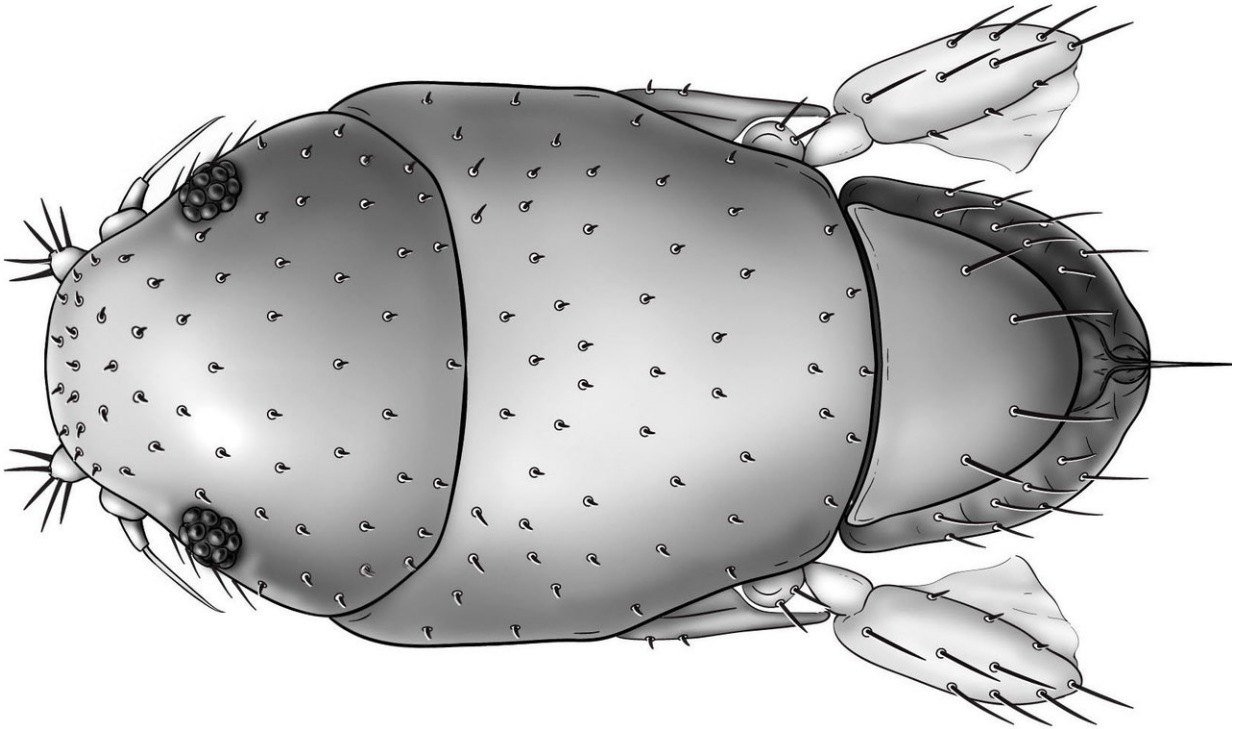
"As soon as I saw those bulging legs, I knew I had to name this one after Arnold," says Brown. "Not only is he a major cultural icon and an important person in the political realm, his autobiography gave me some hope that I could improve my body as a skinny teenager." For these reasons, Brown says, the former governor deserves to have the new fly named in his honor.

His research article is published in the open access *Biodiversity Data Journal*.

The fly is impressive in other ways, Brown explains. "It is known only from one female specimen that we almost overlooked because it is so incredibly small."

In fact, it is the world's smallest known fly, according to Brown, who should know, since he had previously described what was [formerly the world's smallest fly](#), at 0.400 mm in body length. The new fly, named *Megapropodiphora arnoldi*, is just a fraction smaller, coming in at 0.395 mm.

However, unlike the enlarged forelegs that prompted the naming, the mid- and hind legs appear to be highly reduced, and the wings reduced to tiny stubs.



Drawing of the female of the new species *Megapropodiphora arnoldi*. Credit: I. Strazhnik

Even though the fly has not been observed in the wild, Brown concludes that it is clearly a parasitoid, probably of ants or termites, based on its pointed, sharp ovipositor. He further speculates that these flies probably grab onto the hosts and "hold on for dear life" until they reach a nest or colony where they can parasitize their victims more effectively.

Brown has had considerable success finding [new species](#) of tiny flies, which he says are "the continuing frontier for insect discovery."

Some of the more obvious, larger insects might have already been described, but by looking at smaller specimens, especially from remote, tropical sites, the entomologist finds that almost everything is new.

Even in his home city of Los Angeles, Brown and collaborators found that almost half of the phorid flies were previously unknown.



Photomicrograph of the female of the new species *Megapropodiphora arnoldi*.
Credit: Brian Brown

For example, it was last year that they finally figured why a secretive fly

had been observed around mushrooms with no clear explanation for nearly 30 years. The [revelation](#) occurred when L.A. Bed & Breakfast owners Patsy Carter and Lisa Carter-Davis decided to alert entomologists about a phenomenon happening in their yard.

Back in 2016, Brian and his team described at once a total of [twelve scuttle fly species new to science](#) after 'field' trips in the backyards of houses around the city of angels.

More information: Brian Brown, A second contender for "world's smallest fly" (Diptera: Phoridae), *Biodiversity Data Journal* (2018). [DOI: 10.3897/BDJ.6.e22396](#)

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