

The giant cockroach genus *Pseudophoraspis* expands to the north with three new species

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This image shows the back and front of *Pseudophoraspis recurvata*, one of the newly described species Credit: Dr. Zongqing Wang

Cockroaches (Blattodea) are an insect order remarkable in their biodiversity and distribution, with more than 4500 species known and great geographical reach. Cockroach fossils date back around 400 million years, which testifies to their great adaptability and endurance that puts them among the planet's great survivors.

The cockroach [genus](#) *Pseudophoraspis* has been reported from China for the first time thanks to the discovery of three new species: *Pseudophoraspis clavellata*, *Pseudophoraspis recurvata* and *Pseudophoraspis incurvata*, alongside the first regional record of three already described ones. They belong to the cockroach family [Blaberidae](#), known also as giant cockroaches. The study was published in the open access journal [ZooKeys](#).



This image shows the third new species, *Pseudophoraspis incurvata*, with its wings sored out Credit: Dr. Zongqing Wang

Although the adults of the newly described species can reach a size of

around 3 cm in length, they are still some of the smallest representatives in the family. For comparison, the females of the largest species known, [Blaberus giganteus](#), can reach up to 10 cm in length. The heaviest species, [Macropanesthia rhinoceros](#), also known as the [rhinoceros cockroach](#), reaches only around 8 cm but can weigh remarkable 35 grams.

All of the known species of the genus *Pseudophoraspis*, to which the three newly described ones belong, were reported from [Southeast Asia](#) and South Asia, with Vietnam considered the north boundary of their territory. This new record of three already known species, and three newly discovered ones in China's provinces [Hainan](#), [Yunnan](#) and [Guangxi](#), however, considerably expands the reach of the genus to the North.



This image shows the back and front of *Pseudophoraspis clavellata*, which is the largest among the newly described species (more than 3 cm long) Credit: Dr. Zongqing Wang

One of the authors, Dr. Zongqing Wang from the Institute of Entomology, [Southwest University](#), China comments: "All of the known species were reported from Southeast Asia and [South Asia](#), and the previously known boundary of this genus would be Vietnam. We found three new species from China, located in Hainan, Yunnan and Guangxi Provinces respectively, which extends the range of the genus *Pseudophoraspis* northward."

More information: Wang Z, Wu K, Che Y (2013) New record of the cockroach genus *Pseudophoraspis* (Blaberidae, Epilamprinae) from China with descriptions of three new species. *ZooKeys* 273: 1. [doi: 10.3897/zookeys.273.4122](#)

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