

First record of *Formica fennica* Seifert, 2000 (Hymenoptera, Formicidae) in Norway

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During a journey from the south to the central part of Norway, some mound nests of *Formica* spp. Linnaeus, 1758 were inspected, most of them in Sør-Trøndelag County, in relatively little examined parts of Norway. The only nest of *Formica fennica* Seifert, 2000 was registered near Sætervika, in postglacial marsh landscape along a fjord, and this was the western-most record of this species and first one for Norwegian ant fauna to the date. Selected data on this species are compared with data on related *Formica exsecta* Nylander, 1846 from nearby much more common nests. Short information on other registered mound-building *Formica* spp. ants are also mentioned as a contribution to ant faunistics in Norway.

Key words: Hymenoptera, Formicidae, *Formica fennica*, *Formica exsecta*, *Formica* spp., Norway.

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Introduction

Mound-building *Formica* spp. Linnaeus, 1758 are often dominant ants in North-European ecosystems. Due to conspicuous nests and high number of workers, their presence can be easily registered. However, the data on distribution of individual species are often unsatisfactory. The main reasons are as follows: re-evaluation of previously described species and description of new species latterly (Seifert 2000), difficult species determination connected with potential misidentifications, possible hybridization between some ant species (e.g. Kulmuni *et al.* 2010), and vast area of unexplored regions and possible shift of species areas in connection with climatic changes. In Norway, it is very needful to explore new areas and, on the other hand, to compare older information (Collingwood 1979, Kvamme 1982) from previously examined areas with new data from the same sites. It is in accordance with records of ant species new for the Norwegian

fauna these years (Kvamme & Collingwood 2009, Kvamme & Olsen 2011).

Material and methods

During a short trip through Norway in April–May 2012, the author had the opportunity to check visible mound nest of *Formica* spp.. Some of the nests were found near main roads in Oppland and Akkershus counties but most of others were examined in less accessible sites along borders between Nord-Trøndelag and Sør-Trøndelag counties. The explored sites were connected with European Invertebrate Survey (EIS) grid system, commonly used in ant faunistics in Norway (Kvamme 1982). Coordinates of selected nests were registered using GPS device, photos of nests and their surroundings were taken and samples of 2–6 workers per nest were collected into marked plastic vials with paper soaked with ethyl-acetate. Samples were determined later in the laboratory