

A new nocturnal bee of the genus *Megalopta*, with notes on other Central American species (Hymenoptera: Halictidae)

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Abstract: Four species of the nocturnal augochlorine genus *Megalopta* are presently recognized from Central America; three in the nominate subgenus and one in the cleptoparasitic subgenus *Noctoraptor*. The valid Mesoamerican species are *Megalopta (Megalopta) atra* n. sp., *M. (M.) centralis* Friese, *M. (M.) genalis* Meade-Waldo, and *M. (Noctoraptor) byroni* Engel et al. *Megalopta ecuadoria* Friese and *M. tabascanana* Cockerell are newly considered junior synonyms of *M. centralis* and *M. genalis*, respectively (n. syn.). Lectotypes and paralectotypes are designated for *M. ecuadoria* and *M. centralis*.

Keywords: Hymenoptera, Anthophila, Apoidea, Halictidae, Halictinae, Augochlorini, nocturnal bees, Mesoamerica, new species, *Megalopta*, taxonomy, Central America

Introduction

Bees are one of the most commonly encountered and thought of groups of insects. Their role as pollinators instantly brings to mind recollections of individuals busily collecting in flower patches on sunny days. It is therefore interesting to note that in several instances particular lineages of bees have independently become crepuscular or altogether nocturnal. Within the halictine tribe Augochlorini there are at least three independent origins of nocturnal foraging (ENGEL 2000). As an added twist, in the most diverse of these lineages there has arisen nocturnal cleptoparasitic species (i. e., *Megalopta* Smith subgenus *Noctoraptor* Engel et al.) that presumably victimize their congeners. The three lineages