

**First Record of the Spider Wasp
Genus *Epsyron* in Cuba
(Hymenoptera: Pompilidae)**

by

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Epsyron is a cosmopolitan genus, occurring in all major zoogeographic regions. The subspecies *conterminus posterus* (Fox) is encountered from Costa Rica to central California, eastward through southern Arizona, southern New Mexico and southern Texas to southern New York (Wasbauer and Kimsey, 1985, California spider wasps of the subfamily Pompilinae (Hymenoptera: Pompilidae). Bull. California Insect Surv. 26: 1-130). Elliott et al, 1979, (Preliminary annotated list of the wasps of San Salvador Island, the Bahamas, with a new species of *Cerceris* (Hymenoptera: Tiphiidae, Scoliidae, Vespidae, Pompilidae, Sphecidae). Proc. Entomol. Soc. Washington, 81: 352 - 365) collected a male (June, 1978) on Salvador Island. Below we present the first record of this genus from Cuba.

A male and a female were collected in Güines, Havana, on November of 1987 and December of 1988 respectively. Both pompilids were found while we were doing a study on resource partitioning in a community of sphecid wasps in a quarry. In this quarry there are many areas of bare ground where many species of bees and wasps were nesting.

During two years of collecting in the area, no other specimens were seen, nor were any found in Cuban collections. This suggests that *E.*

conterminus posterus is rare in Cuba.

The variation in color traits of this species (Evans, 1950, A taxonomic study of the nearctic spider wasps belonging to the tribe Pompilini Hymenoptera: Pompilidae). Part I. Trans. Amer. Entomol. Soc., 75: 133-270. and Wasbauer and Kimsey, 1985).

Also, the male and the female are not different from those collected throughout its range. The front wing is nearly hyaline with a darker apical band. In the female, the anterior and middle legs are rufous but the posterior ones are bright rufous ferruginous, except the coxae and trochanters. In the male, the posterior pair are more reddish than others which are rufous, but less bright than in the female.

Of particular interest is a pale yellow band on the third tergum in both wasps as in some Texas and Florida specimens (H. E. Evans, pers. comm.).

The wasps have been deposited in the Instituto de Ecología y Sistemática, Ciudad Habana.

We gratefully acknowledge Prof. H. E. Evans (Colorado State Univ.) who confirmed the wasp identifications and kindly provided literature.

**An Exposed *V. germanica*
Colony Usurped by *maculifrons***

by

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On 20 May 1983, I discovered an incipient *Vespa germanica* colony, suspended from my front porch ceiling. I was unable to do more than make casual observations, due to existing commitments, but I was able to observe a few interesting events. Unfortunately, I had to remove the colony the night before a trip to Europe on 30 June. The nest had grown enough to hinder opening the door and potential house-sitters left no doubt that they "wanted it gone!"

The queen had conveniently started the nest just above and exactly between the two ends of an up-turned horse shoe that was nailed to the porch wall. I applied a spot of orange paint to an abdominal tergum, without disturbing the *germanica* foundress at

all. (Throughout her tenure, she displayed almost no notice of me, even during close-up examination of the nest and photography.) For five consecutive nights, however, I did not see her on her nest and I thought it had been orphaned. The night of 26 May found her coiled about the petiole on top of the comb and she assumed this posture nearly every night, until being usurped by a *V. maculifrons* queen on 3 June.

I first noticed the *maculifrons* queen the evening of 3 June, and immediately checked the area for the orange *germanica*; I found no evidence of her and could detect no damage to the nest. My early effort to mark the usurping *maculifrons* queen were futile. She became very agitated, running across the comb, shaking the nest strongly, disappearing behind the envelope, and even making brief flights off the nest. I eventually got a spot of blue on her right wing as she ran exposed across the comb. (She remained very agitated in my presence throughout her tenure, preventing close observations since she ran "wildly" across the comb and took brief flights off the nest when I ventured too close)

By the morning of 4 June, blue wing *maculifrons* had added her tan paper to the periphery of the envelope around the opening, reducing it to the extent that she barely could pass. From 11-16 June, blue wing *maculifrons* made daily envelope modifications that included nearly complete closure during the day followed by nightly removal of paper resulting in a nearly fully exposed comb by about 6 AM. (Such activity was in contrast to the original foundress) (Could this daily "closure" be associated with defense against usurpations?)

The first (still teneral) *germanica* worker was present at 5:30 PM on 21 June, "peacefully" in contact with blue wing *maculifrons* on the comb face. (I tried to mark her, but gave up when blue *maculifrons* became very agitated.) On 22 June, a dead (still soft, undamaged) *germanica* worker was beneath the nest and another *germanica* worker peacefully with blue *maculifrons* on the comb face. On 23 June, 3 *germanica* workers were observed, making occasional flights,