

This manuscript report on new records for the ant fauna found in Asir region of Saudi Arabia and interestingly, though unnoticed by the authors themselves, even for the country. However, numerous important lacks are obvious throughout the text. The objectives are not clearly announced and the introduction merely suggests that one of the main aims is focused on the ecological role of ants and on an analysis of their function as bioindicators of habitat disturbance. However, this topic is not really further discussed in the text. In fact, as shown in the Results section, the main topic concerns the study of the diversity of the ant fauna in Asir region according to an elevation gradient but this objective is not clearly specified in the introduction or in the Methods section and is not accurately exploited in the Results section (see comments on Table 2 in attached file). Finally, the discussion is largely focused on another topic, the seasonal effects on species diversity and abundance, but such an objective arises out of nowhere and its study was not properly planned or even suggested previously. As a consequence, most of the discussion does not follow from the results and is purely and simply speculative.

In a general way, the quality of the redaction and of the language are far from the standards expected for any international scientific journal. Although non-anglophone myself, I feel that all the text needs to be revised and that some editing by expert linguist would have a merit. Moreover, the figures (namely Figs. 2 & 3) are of very poor quality and need to be carefully revised. In particular, Fig. 3 is an aberration (see comments on the manuscript) and, as it appears, in no way at all can show any correlation of temperature, humidity, wind speed and precipitation with species abundance. It does not illustrate nothing of what is further discussed in the text and need to be completely modified.

A number of small errors in the references need to be fixed (see the pdf file in attachment) along with various details in the spelling of the species reported and the identification of the authority of the species names (here also, see the attached pdf file). As a detail, *Cataglyphis bicolor bicolor*, as the nominal subspecies of *C. bicolor*, can be reported simply as *Cataglyphis bicolor* as were reported *Camponotus sericeus sericeus*, *Cataglyphis albicans albicans*, *Crematogaster aegyptiaca aegyptiaca*, *Crematogaster senegalensis senegalensis*, *Monomorium salomonis salomonis*, and *Pheidole megacephala megacephala* throughout the manuscript.

In many instances, the redaction is poor with numerous repetitions. For example in the first paragraph of the introduction, five of the eight sentences begin by "Ants belong...", "Ants are much more...", "Ants play an important role...", "Ants play many important...", "Ants are considered...".

The discussion concerning "Ants taxonomy with distribution" is very disappointing. It resulted essentially in three lists of species but with almost no information. One would have expected some development, for example a comparison with what was previously known for the general ant fauna of Saudi Arabia or about the possible regional specificity or endemism of some species. More specifically, it is particularly surprising finding not any comment about the novelty of the report of two new species of *Cataglyphis* (*C. bicolor* and *C. fortis*) for Saudi Arabia. Both species have never been

previously reported for this country as shown in the most recent revision of this genus for the whole Arabian Peninsula (Sharaf et al., 2015).

At last, the most critical problem with this manuscript is that almost all the introduction section (from line 24 to line 57 of the original manuscript) is an obvious plagiarism of two sources: lines 24-33 are the literal copy of the introductory first paragraph of the article by Orabi et al. (2011) published in *Zoology in the Middle East*; and lines 34-57 are an integral copy of the introduction of the thesis submitted by James Richard Nekolai Glasier in 2012 for his Master of Science in Conservation Biology at the University of Alberta (see pp. 1 & 2 of his introduction). Furthermore, another paragraph in the Methods section (lines 78 to 82 of the original manuscript) was almost literally transcribed from Lattke (2000) (see pp. 155-156 of his chapter). In all these three cases, the original sources are not cited in the text and are not quoted in the references list. Such an unethical conduct, contrary to the publishing policy of any journal's editorial board, is perfectly unacceptable and obviously justifies the definitive rejection of this manuscript.

In order to improve the quality of the manuscript in view of a major restructuration and the possible publication of the most valuable data in another journal, a number of comments were made directly on the manuscript (see the pdf file in attachment).

The references used in these comment (including the sources of the plagiarisms) and in the comments made on the reviewed manuscript are listed below:

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- Orabi, G.M., Semida, F.M., Abdel-Dayem, M.S., Sharaf, M.R. and Zalat, S.M. (2011). Diversity patterns of ants along an elevation gradient at St. Catherine Protectorate, South Sinai, Egypt (Hymenoptera: Formicidae). *Zoology in the Middle East*, 54: 101-112.
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