

Tunisian Dung Beetles Fauna: Composition and Biogeographic Affinities

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Abstract : Dung beetles Scarabaeides of Tunisia constitute a major component of soil fauna, especially in the Mediterranean region. In the first phase of the present study, an intensive investigation of this group following the gathering of all the bibliographic, museological data and based on a recent collection of 17020 specimens in 106 localities in Tunisia, allowed to confirm with certainty the presence of 94 species distributed in 43 genera, 4 families and 3 sub-families. Only 81 species distributed in 38 genres, 4 families, and 3 sub-families, have been found during our prospections. The population of dung beetles Scarabaeides is composed of 58% of Aphodiidae, 39.51% of Scarabaeidae, and 8.64% of Geotrupidae. Biogeographic affinities of the species were determined and showed that 42% of the identified species have a wide Palaearctic distribution, the endemism is very low, only 3 species are endemic to Tunisia *Mecynodes demoflysi*, *Neobodilus marani*, and *Thorectes demoflysi*, 29 species have a wide distribution, 35 are northern and 17 are southern species. Moreover, others are dependent on very specific Biotopes like *Sisyphus schaefferi* linked to the northwest of Tunisia and *Scarabaeus semipunctatus* related to the coastal area north of Tunisia.

Keywords : dung beetles, Tunisia, composition, biogeography

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