

PROJECT SUMMARY

Polydesmid millipedes of New South Wales

Description:

PhD project on the taxonomy and biogeography of keeled millipedes in NSW (Polydesmida, Paradoxosomatidae). CSU post graduate scholarship
Supervisors: Mark Harvey, Nick Klomp, Bob Mesibov and Andrea Wilson

Objectives:

The aim of this research is to document polydesmid species in NSW and then to use selected groups to investigate biogeographical patterns in south eastern Australia. Particular emphasis will be given to speciation patterns in the Snowy Mountains to assess altitudinal zonation

Methods:

1. All documented specimens of NSW specimens from around Australia were borrowed and studied.
2. General hand collecting of more specimens in NSW was undertaken
3. Hand collecting and pitfall trapping is being undertaken in a designated transect through the Snowy Mountains
4. SEM work is being undertaken on specimens
5. All specimens are being identified to species
6. DNA work will be carried out on selected specimens to ascertain phylogenetic relationships

Key Findings:

1. 150 new species have been documented and added to a general database set up by DEH to document the biodiversity of selected faunal groups
2. Polydesmid millipedes are short range endemics, resulting in a great variety of species throughout NSW.
3. While these millipedes are dependent on moisture, they bury themselves during dry periods to surface during wet.
4. They do not generally appear to be affected by fires but do need undisturbed leaf litter to survive: clearing and stock movement through woodlands almost guarantees local population extinctions.



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