

**A NEW SPECIES OF THE INTERESTING
GENUS *RHYNCHOCHALCIS* CAMERON
[HYMENOPTERA:CHALCIDIDAE] FROM
INDIA**

T. C. NARENDRAN

*Department of Zoology, University of Calicut,
Kerala 673 635, India.*

THE interesting genus *Rhynchochalcis* consists of species of Chalcid wasps possessing characteristic long genal regions. Cameron¹ erected the genus based on the type-species *Rhynchochalcis niger* obtained from Cape Colony (South Africa). Later the same author² described *Rhynchochalcis pruinosa* Cameron (Comb. nov.) erroneously under the genus *Megacolus* from Quetta (Pakistan). During the present author's study

stay at the British Museum (Natural History) London, the type of *R. pruinosa* (Type No. 5-123, ♀) was examined and a distinct identity was found. The present new species collected from the Malabar region of Kerala State, shows unique features and hence is described as new. This is named in honour of Dr M. G. Ramdas Menon (Former Principal Systematic Entomologist of Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi) for his significant contributions to the study of Indian insects.

Rhynchochalcis menoni sp. nov. (figure 1)

Female: Length: 4.26 mm. Colour: black, scape and pedicel of antennae, fore and mid tarsi pale yellowish brown; all coxae, femora, tibiae and gaster liver brownish black; bases and apices of fore and mid tibiae pale yellowish brown; hind tarsi dark brown. Forewing with moderate infuscation. Pubescence sparse and silvery.

Head: Vertex extremely narrow; temples extremely narrow; punctures of frons, especially near ocelli not dense but very shallow; pubescence sparse and short all over face; scrobe shallow, not smooth but with striations, reaches front ocellus; gena extremely long (figure 1) and concave; malar sulcus clearly marked, clypeus narrow facing obliquely downwards; toruli separated from clypeus by less than torular diameter;

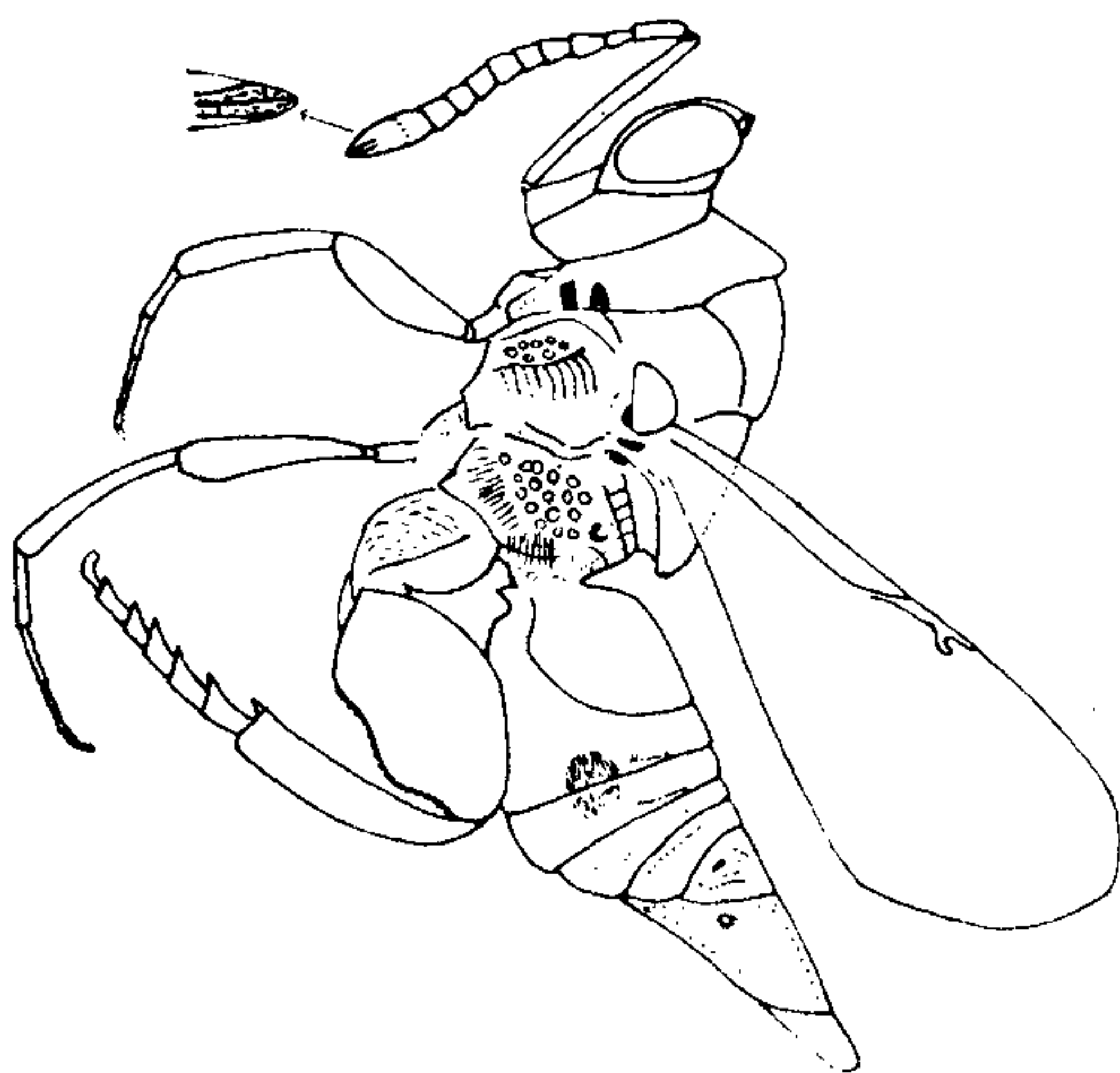


Figure 1. *Rhynchochalcis menoni* sp. nov. ♀ in lateral view.

interantennal lobe rather thin and low. Relative measurements: head width subequal to its length when measured from front; OOL 1.5; POL 9; Lateral ocellus 3.5; Median ocellus 4; minimum interocular distance (when measured at vertex) 19; distance between lateral and median ocelli 5. Antennae as in figure 1; scape reaches front ocellus; club with a characteristic plate of sensillae on the ventral side.

Thorax: maximum length 57; broadest width 37 at pronotum; closely punctate on dorsal side with interstices narrow and ecarinate but rugulose; scutellum length subequal to its width, apex deeply emarginate; notaular grooves shallowly indicated; propodeum with distinct septa of areolation with interspaces between the carinae granular; lateral tooth behind the spiracle distinct. Hind coxa without a distinct tooth on dorsal or ventral side, hind femur without an inner basal tooth; hind tibia without any extra carina on outer side; hind femur with a row of regular comb of teeth on ventral side. Forewing venation as in figure 1: PM subequal to Stigmal; less than half M.

Gaster: long and pointed. First tergite smooth and polished; second tergite medially smooth, sublaterally with microsculptures and distinct pubescence as in figure, rest of the tergites distinctly microsculptured and moderately pubescent; hind margin of tergites not emarginate; sixth tergites with shallow pits on dorsal side.

Male: Length 3.41 – 3.69 mm. Similar to female in general features except in the following: More blackish; antenna stouter with sensillae at apex not distinct; wings without infumation.

Holotype ♀, India: Kerala: Calicut University Campus, 15.ii.1985, coll. T. C. Narendran & Party (No. PL-3560). **Paratypes** 3♂♂, data same for holotype except collection dates (15.iii.'85, 29.v.'85 and 15.ii.'85). All types are in the collections of the Department of Zoology, University of Calicut.

Remarks: This new species differs from *R. pruinosa* in having much shorter epipygium and terebra; shorter post marginal vein; and in different colouration. *R. niger* differs from this new species in having the lateral tooth behind the spiracle at propodeum much larger and stronger; in having a median shallow fovea on scutellum; in having thick silvery pubescence on genotemporal region and in having longer epipygium

and terebra. The species *Rhynchochalcis senegalensis* Steffan³ differs from this new species in having very long terebra and in having the preorbital carinae joining the aureular carena clearly.

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