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Updated checklist of the Canary Islands non-native ants with one name added and two recovered (Hymenoptera: Formicidae)

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SUMMARY

Sporadic sampling over the last decade in the Canary Islands has yielded three added non-native species. One new: *Monomorium sahlbergi* Emery, 1898 from Los Cristianos (Tenerife); and two recovered: *Hypoponera ergatandria* (Forel, 1893) from Caldera de Taburiente and Puntagorda (La Palma) and *Trichomyrmex destructor* (Jerdon, 1851) from San Andrés (Tenerife). In addition, *Tapinoma* cf. *simrothi* Krausse, 1911, recently recorded in Fuerteventura, was found in Gran Canaria and is proposed as a cryptogenic species. None currently appears to pose a significant invasive threat. A century after being collected there, and despite having been officially deleted from the BioCan Catalogue, *T. destructor* is still established at the Playa de las Teresitas (San Andrés; Tenerife). The number of non-native ant species in the Canary Islands has risen to 32, with an exponential trend in recent decades.

INTRODUCTION

Non-native species are a growing component of many biological communities. Focusing on those species, the seminal book of Elton (1958) was a strong push towards developing a new perspective in biogeography. Those species, out of their natural region, may establish and reproduce (Blackburn et al. 2011). A small subgroup of introduced species (Williamson and Fitter 1996, Jeschke and Pyšek 2018) is indeed worthy of study because of its potential to disrupt natural equilibrium in the new region. Species invasions challenge any static view in biogeography (Hengeveld 1989).

Documenting the presence of previously unknown non-native species in any archipelago is a first step in building the database needed to properly manage natural sites. Sadly, non-native species seem to be in a globally huge expansive wave (Pimentel 2002, Lockwood et al. 2007, Richardson 2011).

Some species of social insects, especially ants, are among the most problematic invasive taxa (Williams 1994, Angulo et al. 2022, Tercel et al.

2023, Wong et al. 2023). There are about 200 species of non-native ants worldwide (Suarez et al. 2010), of which 19 are classified as invasive and five of them are among 100 of the World's Worst Invasive Alien Species (GISD 2026). In the Canary Islands, since the first non-native ant was recorded (Heyden 1872), many papers on the subject have been published (see results) and in the latest list provided by Pérez-Delgado et al. (2025) with 62 species, 27 are considered non-native.

The aim of this work is to increase knowledge about the ants of the Canary Islands by updating the list of non-native ants, adding one, recovering two others, and providing information on another.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Over a ten-year period (2014–2024) the first author (ADC-S) has visited the Canary Islands on several occasions, combining holidays with entomological sampling, especially in urban areas. These surveys involved direct sampling (visual search on soil, vegetation, flowerpots, green areas, and any structural support capable of being used by ants) using an entomological aspirator, tweezers, and ethanol vials. Live photographs of the specimens were taken whenever possible. The sampling that informs this work was carried out in February 2014 and July 2024 in Tenerife, in December 2018 and January 2019 in La Palma, and in December 2023 in Gran Canaria.

Identification and measures in *Monomorium sahlbergi* were carried out following Boer et al. (2020), and by comparison with material from Israel: N. Poleg; 8-II-1981; J. Kugler det. leg. The numeric characters and abbreviations used in table 1 are: **CI**, Cephalic Index (CW/CL) ×100. **CL**, Maximum cephalic length in median line. **CW**, Maximum cephalic width, across eyes. **EYI**, Eye Index (maximum eye length / CW) ×100. **Omm**, Number of ommatidia across the widest diameter of the eye. **PI**, Petiole Index (Maximum width of petiole / maximum width postpetiole) ×100. **PrI**, Promesonotal Index (Promesonotal width / CW) ×100. **SI**, Scape Index (Maximum straight line scape length excluding articular condyle / CW) ×100. Measures were obtained using an OLYMPUS SZ61 binocular microscope, at 67.5x, and with a cross-scaled ocular micrometer with 100 graduation marks.

Other ant species in this work were identified using Bolton (1987), Seifert (2004, 2013), Bolton and Fisher (2011) and Seifert et al. (2024). For *Hypoponera* in table 2 the abbreviations used are: **CL**, Head length. **CW**, Head width. **CS**, Cephalic size (mean of CL+CW). **SL**, Scape length. Following Seifert (2013) the discriminant functions are for: workers "D = 142.82 SL – 68.67 CW – 26.12", gynomorphic females "D = 85.90 SL – 18.54 CW – 30.312" and ergatoid males "D = 130.69 SL – 40.553 CW – 28.125". Specimens with $D < 0$ belong to *H. ergatandria* and those with $D > 0$ to *H. punctatissima*, with a classification error of 0 % in all cases.

Coordinates were taken with a Garmin GPS and information on altitude was extracted from Google Earth Pro based on the recorded coordinates. The distribution maps on Gran Canaria, La Palma and Tenerife were generated using the QGIS system software (QGIS 2026) with bibliographical and personally collected data. The timeline figure was created with Python/Matplotlib.

The list of non-native ants has been prepared considering only the first reference in which a species is cited for the first time in the Canary Islands, either with its current name or a valid synonym, as listed in Table 3. The date of the first encounter of each species was extracted from these same references or from others cited within them that contained the relevant data (e.g. Alluaud (1891) for data from Emery (1893)); misidentified specimens that were subsequently corrected were also considered. Table 3 lists all non-native species with their corresponding authors and years of description, so this information has been omitted from the text for these species.

In 2014, some *Trichomyrmex destructor* workers were sent at the Museo de Naturaleza y Arqueología (MUNA) in Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Two workers of *M. sahlbergi*, 20 of *T. destructor* and four of *Hypoponera ergatandria* will be sent to the Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales (MNCN), Madrid. The rest of the material is in the authors' personal collections.

RESULTS

Following various samplings in urban areas, three new species and one recently cited non-native ants in the Canary Islands have been detected.

Monomorium sahlbergi Emery, 1898

Considering the known distribution of the species (Fig. 1a) (Antmaps 2026a), we present here an

important record (Fig. 1b), more than 3000 km away from the nearest one. This species is newly recorded for the Canary Islands and for all Spanish territories.

Material examined. SPAIN: CANARY ISLANDS: TENERIFE: Los Cristianos, at the port, 28°02'59"N 16°43'14"W, 5 m, 23-VII-2024, eight workers (Table 1, Fig. 1c), ADC-S leg. Workers were collected at the port, on the edge and under the leaves of a planter raised one metre off the ground. Other species present in the area: *Paratrechina longicornis* and *Brachymyrmex cordemoyi*.

The species is similar in general appearance to *M. pharaonis*, but *M. sahlbergi* is characterized by a silky head in appearance, with darkened genae in contrast with the yellow to reddish-yellow head (Fig. 1c). Mesosoma is entirely devoid of setae (Fig. 1c), and with scrobiculate sculpture (Harris 1979); petiole with two long setae, postpetiole with four long setae. One fourth of the first gastral tergite yellow, contrasting with the dark posterior 3/4 (Fig. 1c). All workers were measured to obtain morphometric data (Table 1), that shows no major differences with data from Boer et al. (2020).

Table 1. Morphometric data of workers of *Monomorium sahlbergi* from Tenerife compared with data in Boer et al. (2020). Measures in millimetres: range (arithmetic mean). Abbreviations in material and methods.

	***M. sahlbergi* (n=8)** **Tenerife**	***M. sahlbergi* (n=32)** **Boer et al. (2020)**
CW	0.40–0.47 (0.44)	0.40–0.44 (0.42)
CL	0.51–0.58 (0.54)	0.49–0.54 (0.51)
CI	78–81 (80)	79–85 (81)
EYI	21.0–26.3 (22.7)	19–26 (22)
Omm	7–8 (7.3)	7–11 (9)
PI	66–78 (73)	64–73 (69)
SI	100–110 (106)	103–110 (106)
PrI	60.4–66.6 (63.4)	-

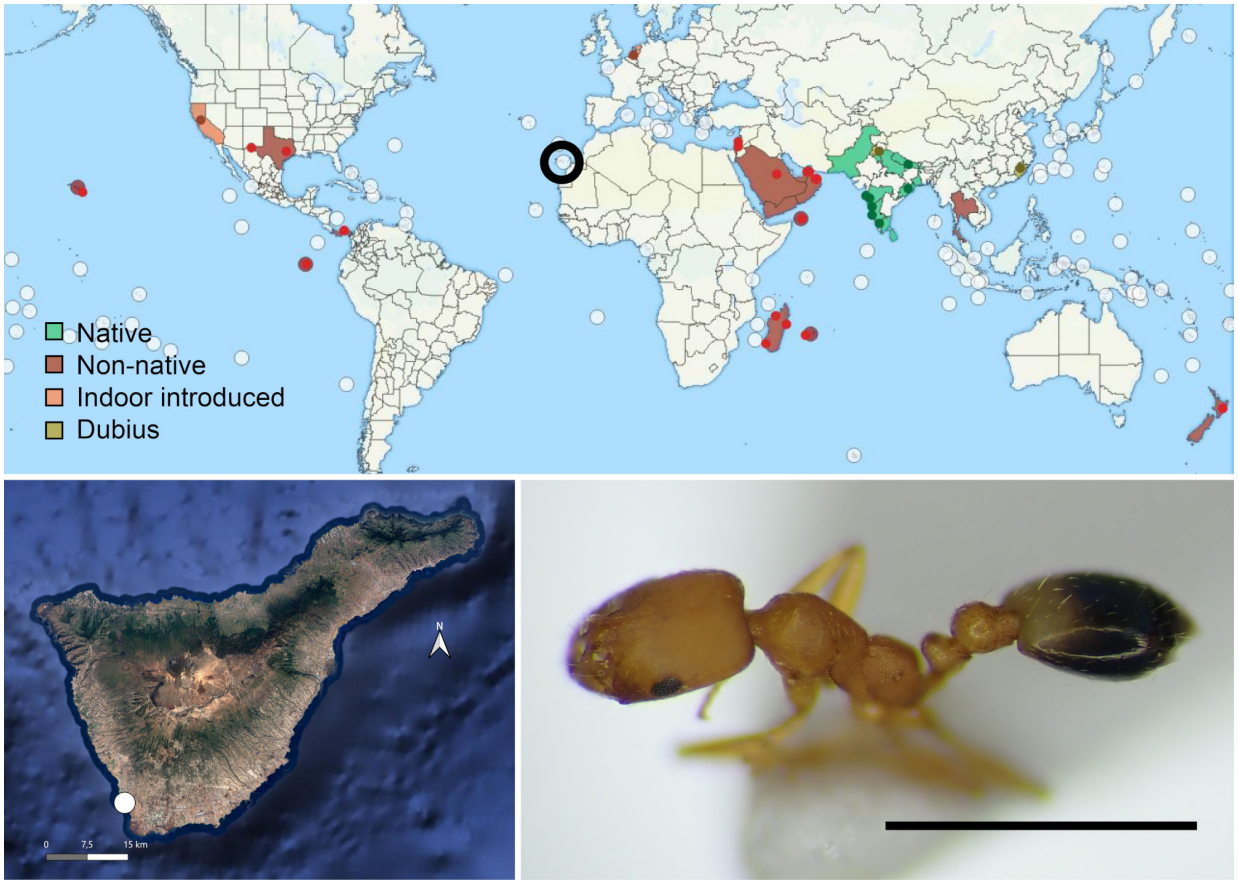

Figure 1. Distribution and image of *Monomorium sahlbergi*: a) global distribution as per Antmaps (2026a) and new record (black ring); b) new record of Los Cristianos, Tenerife, Canary Islands; c) worker in dorso-lateral view, scale 1 mm, note the characters that distinguish it from *M. pharaonis*: the darkened genae, the complete absence of mesosomal hairs, the mesopropodeal depression less pronounced and one fourth of the first gastral tergite yellow.

Hypoponera ergatandria (Forel, 1893)

Cited only once by Santschi (1912), but the species name was then subsequently overlooked in the Canary Islands literature (Wheeler 1927; and later authors). Here we present new current records.

Material examined. SPAIN: CANARY ISLANDS: LA PALMA: Puntagorda, 28°45'42"N 17°59'17"W, 660 m, 29-XII-2018, four workers and one male, ADC-S leg. Under a large rock among pines and prickly pears. Colony with a large egg mass; 28°45'42"N 17°59'21"W, 647 m, 29-XII-2018, one worker under a rock, ADC-S leg. Abandoned orchard with almond trees and grasses; Ciudad de El Paso, Caldera de Taburiente, 28°43'42"N 17°52'30"W, 799m, 4-I-2019, nineteen workers and one queen, ADC-S leg. Under a large rock among pines. Colony with egg mass; 28°43'30"N 17°52'27"W, 762 m, 4-I-2019, five workers and nine queens under a stone, ADC-S leg. In the flood zone limit of the ravine, with herbaceous plants and willows. Ten meters away from another colony with cocoons, five workers were collected.

Furthermore, the Tenerife specimens cited by Espadaler & Bernal (2003) as *H. punctatissima* before the revisions by Seifert (2004, 2013) have been reidentified. The queen belongs to *H. ergatandria* (TENERIFE: Santa Úrsula track, 2-XI-2001, one queen, J. Delgado leg., laurel forest), while the worker remains as *H. punctatissima* (TENERIFE: Sima Robada, 15-XI-1999, one worker, GIET leg.). Material for both species is compared in Table 2.

The discriminant function proposed by Seifert (2013) (Table 2) allows a safe identification for each specimen (worker, queen, ergatoid male). Considering the consistency of the morphological identification and the biological significance of the joint occurrence in our samples of several castes (Table 2), we support the Seifert's decision on the specific value of the name *H. ergatandria*.

Table 2. Morphometric data for *Hypoponera ergatandria* from La Palma. Plus, one *H. ergatandria* queen and one *H. punctatissima* worker from Tenerife previously mentioned by Espadaler and Bernal (2003). For discriminant functions and abbreviations see in material and methods. Measures in millimetres.

	H. ergatandria							***H. punctatissima***
Island	La Palma						Tenerife	Tenerife
Locality	Puntagorda			El Paso			Santa Úrsula	Sima Robada
Caste	Worker	Worker	Male	Worker	Worker	Queen	Queen	Worker
CL	0.600	0.655	0.7125	0.643	0.610	0.666	0.662	0.662
CW	0.500	0.555	0.550	0.533	0.51	0.599	0.575	0.550
SL	0.413	0.422	0.375	0.422	0.399	0.466	0.450	0.463
CL/CW	1,200	1,180	1,295	1,206	1,196	1,111	1,152	1,204
SL/CS	0.750	0.697	0.594	0.717	0.712	0.736	0.727	0.763
Discriminant	-1.54	-3.96	-1.42	-2.45	-4.16	-1.39	-2.32	2.17

Trichomyrmex destructor (Jerdon, 1851)

The species was last recorded from Tenerife in 1929 (Emery 1893, 1908, Menozzi 1929, Barquín 1981) and is not officially considered present by the Canary Islands government in BioCan, its Canary Islands natural inventory bank (BioCan 2026, based on Hohmann et al. 1993), although it does appear in some resources (Antmaps 2026b). Here we present new current records (Fig. 2a), for a population that has remained in the same location for at least the last twelve years:

Material examined. SPAIN: CANARY ISLANDS: TENERIFE: San Andrés, Las Teresitas Beach, 28°30'39"N 16°10'52"W, 1 m, 27-II-2014, 28 workers, ADC-S leg., The workers were tending aphids (*Aphis fabae* Scopoli, 1763) on a small bush of the seagrape *Coccoloba uvifera* (L.) L. Other species present in the area: *Cardiocondyla mauritanica*, *Monomorium subopacum* (Smith, 1858), *P. longicornis*, *Pheidole megacephala* and *Tetramorium depressum* Forel, 1892; Same location, 21-VII-2024, > 100 workers (Figs. 2b, 2c), ADC-S leg. A queen was observed on the trunk, near the base, but could not be captured. The workers show marked size variation (Fig. 2c) and from numerous foraging trails on the trunks of several trees in the car

Figure 2. *Trichomyrmex destructor* in the Canary Islands: a) bibliographic (red diamonds) and new records of San Andrés (white circle), Tenerife; b) worker general view, in a branch; c) two workers, showing the high individual size polymorphism [b and c *in situ* photographs].

park gardens, mainly the seagrape but also the royal poinciana *Delonix regia* (Bojer ex Hook.) Raf. Other ant species present: *Cardiocondyla obscurior*, *Lepisiota frauenfeldi kantarensis*, *P. longicornis* and *Tetramorium caldarium*.

Tapinoma cf. *simrothi* Krausse, 1911

Recorded from Betancuria (Fuerteventura, Canary Islands) (Lebas 2022), although the species was not considered in the Pérez-Delgado et al. (2025) list nor in BioCan (2026). These constitute the first records for Gran Canaria (Fig. 3a).

Material examined. SPAIN: CANARY ISLANDS: GRAN CANARIA: Telde, Arnao Park, 27°59'58"N 15°24'56"W, 135 m, 31-XII-2023, one male drowned in a fountain (Figs. 3b, 3c), ADC-S leg. Without associated workers. Other species present: *P. longicornis* and *P. megacephala* were the only active species found in the entire park, although drowned males of *T. depressum* were also found in the fountains; The specimens cited by Barquín (1981) as *Tapinoma erraticum* (Latreille, 1798) from Maspalomas (Gran Canaria) [seven workers from citrus, 20-II-1979, S. Gil leg.] were examined about fifteen years ago by XE and identified at that time as belong to *T. simrothi*.

The male found in Telde was exceptionally large (Fig. 3c) and its genitalia were characterized by the distinctive gripper-like harpago of the *simrothi* group (Fig. 3b). The separation of the males within the four species in the group seems to be difficult and is, at present, unresolved. As stated by Seifert et al. (2024) morphometry "*appears promising when enough data will be available*". We consider *T.* cf. *simrothi* to be the most likely identification for that isolated male (see discussion).

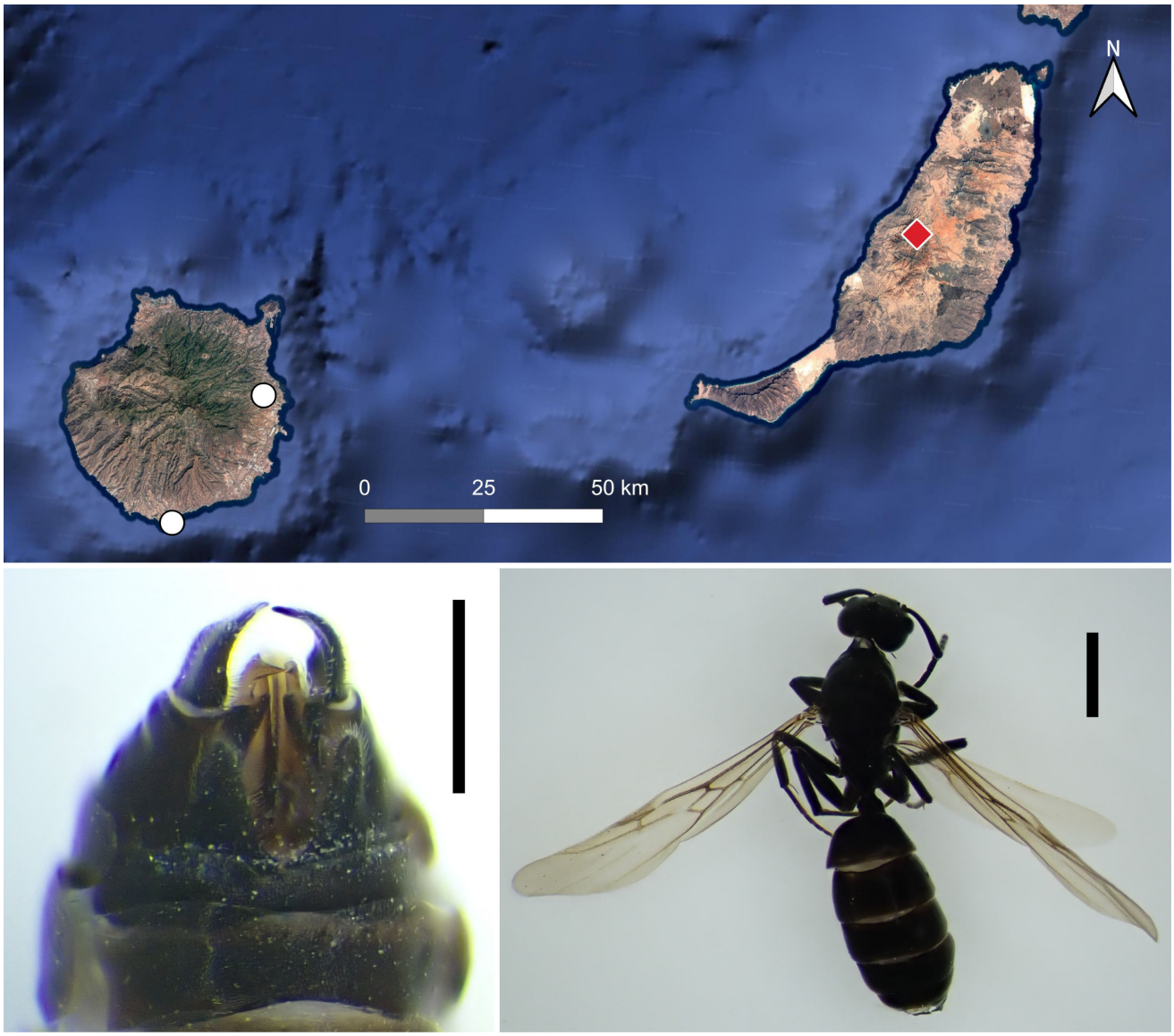

Figure 3. *Tapinoma* cf. *simrothi* in the Canary Islands: a) new records of Telde and Maspalomas, Gran Canaria (white circles) and the bibliographic record of Betancuria, Fuerteventura (red diamond); b) detail of male genitalia in ventral view, scale 0.5 mm; c) male in dorsal view, scale 1 mm.

List of non-native ants (Table 3)

The first non-native species in the Canary Islands was *P. megacephala* (as *Pheidole pusilla*) recorded by Heyden (1872). Twenty years later new species were recorded by Emery (1893): *H. punctatissima* (as *Ponera punctatissima*), *P. longicornis* (as *Prenolepis longicornis*) and *T. destructor* (as *Monomorium destructor*); and Forel (1893): *Pheidole indica* (as *P. teneriffana*). Subsequently, were cited *H. ergatandria* (as *Ponera ergatandria*) by Santschi (1912); *Linepithema humile* (as *Iridomyrmex humilis*) by Stitz (1917); *Cardiocondyla emeryi* by Wellenius (1955); *Aphaenogaster iberica* and *Monomorium pharaonis* by Barquín (1981).

In the 21st century, the appearance of non-native species has increased considerably (Fig. 4) with the records of *C. mauritanica*, *Lasius neglectus*, *Nylanderia jaegerskioeldi* (as *Paratrechina jaegerskioeldi*) and *T. caldarium* by Espadaler and Bernal (2003); *Pheidole pallidula*, *Tapinoma melanocephalum*, *Tetramorium bicarinatum*, *Tetramorium simillimum* and *Solenopsis geminata* by Högmo (2003); *C. obscurior* by Seifert (2003); *Lepisiota capensis* by Espadaler and Fernández (2014); *L. frauenfeldi kantarensis* by Schifani et al.

(2018); *Plagiolepis alluaudi* by Staab (2019); *B. cordemoyi*, *Pheidole bilimeki*, *Pheidole navigans*, *Strumigenys membranifera*, *Tapinoma darioi* and *Technomyrmex pallipes* by Hernández-Teixidor et al. (2020); *T. simrothi* by Lebas (2022); *Wasmannia auropunctata* by Pérez-Delgado et al. (2025); and finally, *M. sahlbergi* in this work.

Emery (1893) also cited the non-native ant *Monomorium carbonarium* (Smith, 1858) (as *M. minutum carbonarium*), though himself redescribed two years later the same material as the good endemic species *Monomorium hesperium* Emery, 1895. Records of *Myrmica schencki* Viereck, 1903 by Stitz (1917) and *Formica sanguinea* Latreille, 1798 by Wellenius (1955) were considered as credible in some later works, and Barquín (1981) even verified the identification of the only worker of *F. sanguinea*. However, these two species have ecological requirements not found in the Canary Islands and are currently considered isolated records of specimens translocated by humans, which is why they have been excluded from ant lists for decades (Hohmann et al. 1993, Izquierdo et al. 2004, BioCan 2026). Records of *T. simillimum* from Gran Canaria (Wolf 1980, Högmo 2003) are highly likely to belong to *T. caldarium*, as Espadaler and Bernal (2003) already stated, and Pérez-Delgado et al. (2025) excludes this species from their list. We keep the species "as dubious" in the list until it can be verified, just like the administration does (BioCan 2026).

For the timeline of the non-native ants in the Canary Islands (Fig. 4), misidentified specimens were considered. All records of *Cardiocondyla nuda* (Mayr, 1866) in Barquín (1981) are *C. mauritanica* following Espadaler and Bernal (2003). Older citations (since 1947) of *Tetramorium guineense*

Table 3. List of non-native ant species of the Canary Islands. *= cryptogenic species, **= doubtful presence.

Nº	Exotic species	First reference
1	*Aphaenogaster iberica* Emery, 1908	Barquín (1981)
2	*Brachymyrmex cordemoyi* Forel, 1895	Hernández-Teixidor et al. (2020)
3	*Cardiocondyla emeryi* Forel, 1881	Wellenius (1955)
4	*Cardiocondyla mauritanica* Forel, 1890	Espadaler and Bernal (2003)
5	*Cardiocondyla obscurior* Wheeler, 1929	Seifert (2003)
6	*Hypoponera ergatandria* (Forel, 1893)	Santschi (1912)
7	*Hypoponera punctatissima* (Roger, 1859)	Emery (1893)
8	*Lasius neglectus* Van Loon, Boomsma & Andrásfalvy, 1990	Espadaler and Bernal (2003)
9	*Lepisiota capensis* (Mayr, 1862)	Espadaler and Fernández (2014)
10	*Lepisiota frauenfeldi kantarensis* (Forel, 1911)	Schifani et al. (2018)
11	*Linepithema humile* (Mayr, 1868)	Stitz (1917)
12	*Monomorium pharaonis* (Linnaeus, 1758)	Barquín (1981)
13	*Monomorium sahlbergi* Emery, 1898	This work
14	*Nylanderia jaegerskioeldi* (Mayr, 1904)	Espadaler and Bernal (2003)
15	*Paratrechina longicornis* (Latreille, 1802)	Emery (1893)
16	*Pheidole bilimeki* Mayr, 1870	Hernández-Teixidor et al. (2020)
17	*Pheidole indica* Mayr, 1879	Forel (1893)
18	*Pheidole megacephala* (Fabricius, 1793)	Heyden (1872)
19	*Pheidole navigans* Forel, 1901	Hernández-Teixidor et al. (2020)
20	*Pheidole pallidula* (Nylander, 1849)	Högmo (2003)
21	*Plagiolepis alluaudi* Emery, 1894	Staab (2019)
22	*Solenopsis geminata* (Fabricius, 1804)	Högmo (2003)
23	*Strumigenys membranifera* Emery, 1869	Hernández-Teixidor et al. (2020)
24	*Tapinoma darioi* Seifert, D'Eustacchio, Kaufmann, Centorame, Lorite & Modica, 2017	Hernández-Teixidor et al. (2020)
25	*Tapinoma melanocephalum* (Fabricius, 1793)	Högmo (2003)
26	**Tapinoma* cf. *simrothi* Krausse, 1911	Lebas (2022)
27	*Technomyrmex pallipes* (Smith, 1876)	Hernández-Teixidor et al. (2020)
28	*Tetramorium bicarinatum* (Nylander, 1846)	Högmo (2003)
29	*Tetramorium caldarium* (Roger, 1857)	Espadaler and Bernal (2003)
30	***Tetramorium simillimum* (Smith, 1851)	Högmo (2003)
31	*Trichomyrmex destructor* (Jerdon, 1851)	Emery (1893)
32	*Wasmannia auropunctata* (Roger, 1863)	Perez-Delgado et al. (2025)

Figure 4. Timeline of first collected specimens of non-native ants in the Canary Islands. Species are ordered chronologically. Green labels: the exact year; Blue labels: year not indicated in publication and estimated by the available information; Orange labels: years range.

(Fabricius, 1973) (Wolf 1980, Barquín 1981), now a synonym of *T. bicarinatum*, have not been considered, since according to Espadaler and Bernal (2003) they may belong to any of the three species of *Tetramorium* in the list (Table 3). For *T.* cf. *simrothi*, revised material of Barquín (1981) discussed above was considered.

DISCUSSION

With respect to *Monomorium sahlbergi*, Antmaps (2026a) (Fig. 1a) shows what is known for the geographical distribution, to which we must add the new locality of Tenerife (Fig. 1b), several thousand kilometers from the nearest one. Its capture in the port area of Los Cristianos seems to indicate that its arrival on the island has followed this route, as indicated for other invasive species in the Canary Islands (Barquín, 1981). The defining characteristics of the species were very clear (Fig. 1c), and the morphometry of the Canarian specimens (Table 1) were within the ranges provided by Boer et al. (2020). After this interesting record, it is possible that some samples in the Canary Islands —and, by extension, from the Maghreb and Mediterranean Europe— attributed to the much more abundant Pharaoh's ant, *M. pharaonis*, present in El Hierro and Tenerife (some samples confirmed by XE) (Espadaler & Bernal 2003, BioCan 2026), belong indeed to *M. sahlbergi*.

The name *Hypoponera ergatandria* was used by Santschi (1912) merely noting «*En outre, je viens de recevoir la forme typique de* P. ergatandira *(sic.) des Canaries (Ténérife)*.», and Wheeler (1922: 781) recorded *ergatandria* from "Tenerife", likely based on Santschi's paper. Surprisingly, the name disappeared from his subsequent paper on the ants of the Canary Islands (Wheeler 1927), in which he only mentions the sister species *H. punctatissima*, despite the fact that both species were later synonymized (Taylor 1968) and re-established again by Seifert (2013). Since 1922 the name *H. ergatandria* was never used again for Canarian samples until that information surfaced anew thanks to Janicki et al. (2016) and Guénard et al. (2017) and it can be visualised in Antmaps (2026c). For an excellent summary of the whereabouts of both names see Bolton (2026).

The material here examined, using the three castes, confirms the presence of *H. ergatandria* as is presently conceived (Seifert 2004, 2013). It is important to note that *H. punctatissima* is also known from Tenerife in one locality (Espadaler & Bernal 2003), while the other specimen has been reidentified as *H. ergatandria* in this work (Table 2). Furthermore, using unpublished data, BioCan (2026) places the species in several locations in La Palma, Tenerife and Lanzarote. The presence of both species in those islands allows, and deserves, a dedicated study of general biology, especially on the appearance of sexuals: according to Seifert (2004, 2013), and for Central Europe, both species would differ in nesting sites, swarming and dispersal. Flying gynes of *H. punctatissima* disperse mainly in summer, whereas *H. ergatandria* would take flight mainly in winter. The general subtropical climate of the Canary Islands, though, may reduce those biological differences.

The geographic distribution of *Trichomyrmex destructor* covers much of the world, especially tropical and subtropical regions, although it is considered native to India (Antmaps 2026b). It is notable for its large presence on islands far from the continents (Antmaps 2026b).

The species was cited from the Canary Islands by Emery (1893), who comments in Emery (1908): «*From the Palearctic region, I only know of specimens from Tenerife*», without providing further information. Wheeler (1927) indicates it with workers from Santa Cruz (Tenerife) and later, a complete nest with workers, females, and males was found in San Andrés (Tenerife) by Menozzi (1929). No doubts should be expressed concerning those specific identifications. Considering the above data, the species is included for the island of Tenerife in the "Preliminary List of the Hymenoptera of the Canary Islands" (Báez and Ortega 1978). The material from the Museum of Natural Sciences of the Island Council of Tenerife consulted by Barquín (1981) includes deposited specimens collected in 1893, 1908, 1921 and 1929, which correspond to previous data (Emery 1908, Wheeler 1927, Menozzi 1929).

In the Canary Islands Biodiversity Data Bank (BioCan 2026), the species was initially included based on the work of Báez and Ortega (1978), but it was eliminated considering Hohmann et al. (1993), who no longer included it in the Canary Islands list. The species has not been recorded again for nearly a hundred years (since 1929) and is not officially considered present (BioCan 2026). Despite this, the species is registered in the Canary Islands according to Antmaps (2026b). Some authors already

indicated that it was likely that the species was established, although confirmation was needed (Espadaler and Bernal 2003), as we do here.

The samples presented in this work are from San Andrés, the same locality mentioned by Menozzi (1929) without any further information. Las Teresitas beach is currently a popular tourist spot, and during the first trip in 2014, ADC-S arrived by bus to spend an afternoon at the beach. Without knowing what they were, some *T. destructor* specimens were captured, and ten years later, the population was sought on purpose, was still present at the same location. This beach area has changed significantly since the beginning of the 20th century, but could it be the same population Menozzi mentioned a century ago? Most of the companion species of *T. destructor* at Las Teresitas Beach have changed over the past ten years, with only *P. longicornis* remaining. In 2014, of the six species captured, two were native and four were non-native; in 2024, all five species found were non-native. However, it should be noted that the sampling was carried out at different times of the year, and this may have influenced the activity of the species. *T. destructor* remains well-established in San Andrés, as it was abundant on a few trees, and perhaps the situation of this small population would be optimal for attempting its eradication and validating the current official situation.

In the case of *Tapinoma simrothi*, its current distribution covers the western Mediterranean and Atlantic coast of southern Iberia and Marrocco (Seifert et al. 2024). Recently cited from the Canary Islands based on workers near a small garden and a water point in the village of Betancuria (Fuerteventura) (Lebas 2022), but its first record is from 1979 in Maspalomas (Gran Canaria) when it was erroneously cited as *T. erraticum* by Barquín (1981). However, these identifications were made prior to the review by Seifert et al. (2024). Nowadays, the *Tapinoma simrothi* group contains four cryptic species: *T. simrothi*, *T. insularis* Seifert et al., 2024*, T. phoeniceum* Emery, 1925 and *T. karavaievi* Emery, 1925 and the separation of the males seems to be difficult (Seifert et al. 2024). In their key to species, Seifert et al. (2024) note «*Mediterranean zone between 10°W and 10°E*.» for *T. simrothi* and «*Mediterranean zone between 9 and 16°E, few introductions outside this area.*» for *T. insularis*, recently located in Greece by Menchetti et al. (2026). That "outside" is a couple of localities from the Iranian coast at the Persian Gulf.

A re-identification of the workers found in Betancuria and Maspalomas is necessary to confirm the species (one or more) present in the Canary Islands for the *Tapinoma simrothi* group. Given the abundance of *T. simrothi* citations in the western Mediterranean and Atlantic coast of Marrocco (Seifert et al. 2024), we regard *T.* cf. *simrothi* as the most likely identification for all those samples.

Although many sexuals and workers were floating on the surface of the three central fountains in Arnao Park, only one drowned male of *T. simrothi* was found. This observation, together with the absence of worker ants during sampling, suggests that the species may not actually be established in the park and came from the surrounding area, attracted by the lights or the reflection of the water surface at night. Its presence in the park matches the habitat where it was found in Betancuria (Fuerteventura) (Lebas 2022).

Tapinoma simrothi was considered a non-native species in the Canary Island by Lebas (2022), prior to the review by Seifert et al. (2024). The fact that it has been recorded so far only on two islands and three locations, all of them anthropized areas, such as parks, together with the fact that its first detection was in 1979, coinciding with the increase in tourism and the beginning of the increase of non-native species in the Canary Islands (Fig. 4), suggests that the species may be non-native. On the other hand, its arrival may have been natural, due to the high number of records in the south of the Iberian Peninsula and Morocco (Seifert et al. 2024) and the winds that can reach the islands from the continent, especially during spring and summer the trade winds, which come from the northeast, but occasionally, they can originate from the Sahara Desert (Font Tullot 1959, Fernandopullé 1976), which may have carried some fertilized queens after the mating flight. This possibility has been confirmed or suggested for many groups (Juan et al. 2000, Gillespie and Roderick 2002, Díaz-Pérez et al. 2008, Husemann et al. 2014). So, for the moment we consider *T.* cf. *simrothi* a cryptogenic species, pending molecular studies that include the known locations of the Canary Islands, which may conclude on its native or non-native origin.

With those three additions, up to 32 species of non-native ants (one cryptogenic, one dubious) are registered for the Canary Islands (Table 3, Fig. 4). Considering the latest published list of ants from the Canary Islands (Pérez-Delgado et al. 2025), which

considers 35 native ant species, non-native ants currently make up 48% of the ants present in the Canary Islands. The species' richness and general distribution of non-native ants on those islands indicates a clear pattern and agrees with current opinion on the higher vulnerability of islands to non-native species as compared with continental regions (Loope and Mueller-Dombois 1989, Lonsdale 1999, fig. 4, Russell et al. 2017). In the words of Weber (1939) «*These cosmopolites consequently are found first in seaports, and they may or may not be able to invade the country*». As far as we know for the Canary Islands, only one ant species, the Argentine ant, can "*invade the country*" and establish populations far from the highly urbanized peripheral coastline.

Both an increased awareness of the problem posed by non-native and invasive species worldwide and of the intensification of tourism and merchandise traffic between distinct biogeographical realms seem to be involved in the last decades of the growing process of non-native ants accumulation over time in the Canary Islands (Fig. 4). The first period showed a seemingly constant increase until shortly before the year 2000, followed by a period of accelerated increase. This roughly fits the two-waves of globalization model of Bonnamour et al. (2021) and Bonnamour and Bertelsmeier (2025).

Currently, non-native species are constantly appearing all over the world, and the Canary Islands are no exception, so unfortunately the present non-native ants list will likely need to be updated soon.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Both authors have contributed equally to conceptualization and writing. ADC-S did the field work and XE the ant identification.

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