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Ataeniopsis edistoi (Cartwright) in Florida (Scarabaeidae: Aphodiinae)

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Ataenius edistoi Cartwright (1974) was described from a series of eight specimens collected near the Edisto River in South Carolina. All were "collected under surface litter on sandy but hard ground along the roadside." According to Cartwright (1974) attempts to collect the species at light at the type locality were not successful, indicating the species does not come to light. The species was transferred to the genus *Ataeniopsis* Petrovitz by Stebnicka (2003) in a revision of the genus. *Ataeniopsis* differs from *Ataenius* Harold in that the apical half of the pygidium in *Ataeniopsis* is smooth and glabrous, while in *Ataenius* it is eroded and usually alutaceous. The rarity of *A. edistoi* was emphasized by the fact that Stebnicka saw no additional specimens.

While identifying specimens in the collection of H. Howden (HAHC) in the Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, I discovered a series of specimens of an unrecognized species from Florida. After some study of literature and comparison of a paratype *A. edistoi* from the Smithsonian Institution, it was obvious that the specimens in question were *A. edistoi*. Their label data are: FLA: Jackson Co., Fla. Cave [sic] St. Pk., 8-10-VI-1981, litter, S. Peck (8 HAHC, 3 P.E. Skelley collection).

Ataeniopsis edistoi and *Ataeniopsis saxatilis* (Cartwright) are closely related species, both are endemic to the southeastern United States. They differ from other members of the genus by their broad body shape and lack of teeth on the epistome. They differ from each other in pronotal and pygidial punctation patterns, with *A. edistoi* being more closely punctured on the pronotum and having a dense row of punctures across the base of the apical half of its pygidium.

With this new record, it is interesting to note that *A. saxatilis* is found above the fall line, while *A. edistoi* is found below. Florida Caverns State Park is located along the Chipola River, in a situation similar to the type locality for *A. edistoi* (pers. comm. P. Harpootlian). More collecting in litter in these situations near rivers in the southeastern coastal plain should produce additional specimens of this rarely seen species.

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Literature cited

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