

Fairy Circles of the Namib Desert

Ecosystem engineering by subterranean social insects

by

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Cover photographs:

Front: Aerial view of fairy circles around a local pan with *Acacia erioloba* near Namibrand, taken on 05th March 2010.

Back page upper image: View of the southern Giribesvlakte and Leopard Rock, two hours after a rainstorm on 10th March 2008.

Back page lower large image: Tunnel system within a nest of *Psammotermes allocerus* found on 26th September 2016 at the study site Springklipvlakte in the Richtersveld.

Back page lower part termites: Each caste of the termite *Psammotermes allocerus* complex is shown: queen (on top of left hand side), several workers (left hand side, lower part), king (darkish, upper part at right hand side), two soldiers (right hand side, middle). These termites were collected in one nest located within a fairy circle at Yellow Dune in the Richtersveld (09.03.2015). An alate (winged termite) is shown in the lower part of left hand side, collected at Rotkuppe, Tsau Iikhaeb National Park (former Sperrgebiet) (4.10.2022). The size of the termites is shown in correct relativ proportions, average size: worker 5 mm, soldier 7 mm, alate 7 mm (without wings), king 7 mm, queen 16 mm.

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Chapters by other authors: please note the citation suggestion at the respective chapter.

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social insects**

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