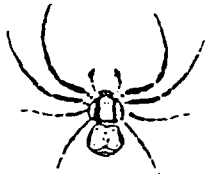


British Arachnological Society



NEWSLETTER No. 14

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CLIFFORD J. SMITH
7, MALTON WAY
CLIFTON
YORK YO3 6SG
Tel: YORK (0904)25928

SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME

It is now five years since the Spider Recording Scheme was inaugurated, and we have promised ourselves another five years to accumulate sufficient data with which to produce distribution maps for each of the 600+ British species. Since the production of SRS Newsletter No. 13, the following special excellent results are worthy of mention:

South Devon: another 62 completed RA65s bring the vice-county total to 242. Alex Williams has doubled the East Kent total to 69.

As a farewell gesture to Surrey, Martin Askins has seen its total rise from 214 to 257 before he departs to Swindon where we hope he will revitalise the spider recording of this area.

The East Norfolk total has risen from 174 to 285 during the past 3 months, largely due to the activities of Rex Hancy and Dr Tracy Sanderson.

West Norfolk, (101), Shropshire (113), Pembroke (103), and Caernarvon (103) have all passed the century mark during the past quarter.

Totals for Cardiganshire have gone up from 89 to 251 during the past 3 months; many thanks to Adrian Fowles (Area Organiser) who provided many items from his own records, copied up those of Kefyn Catley, and collected together data from the recent Welsh Peatlands Survey. Our good wishes go with Adrian to his new job in the north of the Principality and hope that he'll continue to find a bit of time to continue spider recording.

As if to welcome him to the area, Don Roscoe has seen the number of completed RA65s rise from 116 to 154 during the quarter for the Anglesey area.

Jim Wright continues to supervise the Islè of Man vigorously: numbers have risen from 56 to 88.

Having received few cards to date for the Scilly Islands, we've been delighted to add 34 completed RA65s to our totals, sent to use by Trevor Hughes - with the promise of more to come.

Our congratulations go to the Staffordshire team, led by Craig Slawson. Prior to the end of 1990 they had produced 361 cards, but during 1991 they contributed a further 189, making a county total of 550. The team includes; GC Slawson, J Bates, WG Rixom, JD Stanney, J Walker, MR Weston, W Hopkins, SM Barnes, A Smith et alia.

Last, but not least, the RA65 total for Angus went up from 82 to 286 during the 3 months. Adam Garside has recorded a number of sites in the county, particularly by pitfall-trapping, and Jim Stewart (Area Organiser) has identified the specimens. Congratulations to them and their team.

53%

A recent check on spiders recorded by members of the S.R.S. revealed the fact that less than half (47%) had sent in completed RA65 or GEN7 or GEN14 cards during the past twelve months. We hope that some of the remaining 53% will

make a concerted attempt to get their records to us now that we are getting close to the time when all records will have to be in.

DICTYNA MAJOR Menge REDISCOVERED

In the course of an extensive pitfall trapping programme on Barry Links, Angus as part of a project on the habitat preference of Ground Beetles, Adam Garside of Dundee Museum has been capturing many spiders. They have been passed on to me for identification, in the course of which process a male Dictyna major has turned up. It was taken between 28 May and 8 June 1991.

Barry Links cover most of Buddon Ness, a headland on the north side of the estuary of the river Tay. The area is another one of those sites owned by the Ministry of Defence and used as firing ranges. A variety of habitats are being investigated, including marram (*Ammophila arenaria*) fore dune in which the capture was made.

Dictyna major was first taken in Britain on sandhills at Aberlady Bay in East Lothian and described as a new species Dictyna arenicola (Carpenter & Evans, 1894a). An earlier capture on the sands of Loch Morlich near Aviemore was subsequently reported (Carpenter & Evans, 1894b). As far as I can ascertain, the only other British record of this species is of an immature specimen taken on Findhorn sandhills, near Forres (Moray) in 1910 (Hull, 1911).

Thus it would appear that the Dundee specimen is a re-discovery after 80 years at least. My thanks to Dr Peter Merrett for confirming the identification.

James A Stewart, 109 Greenbank Crescent, Edinburgh EH10 5TA.

Footnote: Recently Chris Felton has examined Linnaeus Greening's Spider Collection in Warrington Museum and records a specimen of Dictyna major, taken from the Isle of Hoy (GR HY:2203) on September 6th, 1897.

ARGIOPE BRUENNICHI in the South West

This handsome creature is reported as being distributed along the south-east coast between Kent and Dorset.

When last October a gentleman from Plymouth contacted me regarding a rather unusual spider he had found in his garden, I was surprised to discover that his jam jar contained a mature female A. bruennichi. Attempting to emulate Conan Doyle's deductive hero I suggested that he must have just returned from a holiday in the south east of the country. But the solution was not all that elementary, as he assured me that he had not visited those parts for some years. A brief search of the area around the gentleman's garden was instigated, but revealed no further specimens. So at present the occurrence of this species in the Plymouth suburbs remains a mystery.

Prompted by this discovery, I contacted the local Biological Record Centres to see if Argiope had been found in the South West before. The Royal Albert Museum at Exeter had no records for Devon, but the Cornish BRC at Cambourne had two records for Cornwall. In September 1965, fifteen individuals were found at a site on the Fal estuary. The other record is of a single spider in 1985 from a bay window at Gweek on the Helford River.

It seems possible that small isolated colonies may exist in Devon and Cornwall, so if you are visiting this part of the country in the autumn, keep an eye out for it.

(Peter Smithers, SRS 67, 40 Copperfields, Horrbridge, Yelverton, Devon. PL20 7UB)

COMPUTERIZATION and the S.R.S.

Following a long discussion between Brian Eversham (National BRC), John Crocker (BAS Council) and Craig Slawson (SRS) in March, the way forward for SRS Recorders who use a computer to store their data became clearer. Since that time, Deborah Procter has agreed to take over the necessary liaison between the SRS and the BAS Council. The following notes may be of help to SRS computer users:

- a. Following the publication of the new BAS Checklist, updates will be numbered in a consistent fashion by the BRC at Monks Wood. Recorders will be notified of any changes in the SRS Newsletter and/or the BAS Newsletter.
- b. BRC (Monks Wood) will supply on request a complete checklist of British Spiders on a disk if a blank 3.5" or 5.25" is supplied by the recorders, otherwise on paper. Please contact Brian Eversham at Monks Wood for further details.
- c. Recorders using computers should supply lists for authentication. They should be sent annually to Deborah Procter (J.N.C.C., Monkstone House, City Road, Peterborough PE1 1JY) for checking. They should contain the minimum of data that is required on a RA65 card: Locality, vice-county, grid reference, site description name of recorder, name of determiner, vice-county name, date, altitude, source (field/museum/literature), structured habitat, collecting techniques used, and species list. Suitable generic abbreviations are acceptable.
- d. Advice on the choice of computer, and a recommended list of fields will be supplied on request by G Craig Slawson (Ecorecord Unit 212, Jubilee Trades Centre, 130 Pershore Street, Birmingham B5 6NB)

Deborah Procter has kindly agreed to write an article for the next edition of the SRS Newsletter, due to be sent out to recorders in the early autumn. She will be expanding ideas that are outlined in item c. (above).

PARDOSA PALUSTRIS

Eric Duffey (SRS No.18) writes:

I would be grateful for detailed descriptions of where Pardosa palustris has been taken: type of vegetation; whether wet, dry, open or overgrown; 6 figure grid ref. if possible, otherwise locality name. For each site I would like to know whether it was common (more than 10 specimens taken during one visit) or scarce.

If response is good, a summary note will be offered to the SRS Newsletter. Please reply to: Dr E Duffey, Cergne House, Wadenhoe, PETERBOROUGH PE8 5ST. I shall be abroad until 28th September, so I hope to find a pile of P. palustris letters waiting for me on my return!

ALOPECOSA FABRILIS

Jonty Denton (SRS No.121) reports having found 2 ♂ and 1 ♀ Alopecosa fabrilis in slit trenches in Surrey in September 1990, at the same site as recorded in British Red Data Book 3 p.161/2 at Hankley Common. He found it especially under replaced heather turfs in open heath with scattered birch and pine.

NEW STAFFORDSHIRE SPECIES

Wayne Rixom (SRS No.99) made a first Staffs. record for Ceratinella scabrosa at Loynton Moss (SJ 79.24) in May 1991: Craig Slawson recorded Porrhomma oblitum and Saloca diceros at the same site in June 1991.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

The following new Recorders have been registered as members of the S.R.S.:

- 141 Mr A E Cooper, Biscoombe Hill Farm, Churchinford, TAUNTON TA3 7PZ
- 142 Mr Dave Lee, 22 Summer lane, BARNSELEY S70 6BN
- 143 Mr Mike Bailey, Plas Gogerddan, ABERYSTWYTH, Dyfed SY23 3EE
- 144 Ms Jennifer M Newton, Holly House, Hornby, LANCASTER LA2 8TY
- 145 Mr Ron Arthur, 84 Gray Street, ABERDEEN AB1 6JE

Mr Paul Lee (SRS No. 128) has kindly agreed to become Area Organiser for both parts of SUFFOLK. All records from VC 25 and 26 should be sent to him at: Rochdale Cottage, Camps Heath, LOWESTOFT, Suffolk NR32 5DW.

We would like to thank Mr Adrian Fowles for all the work he has done as AO for Cardiganshire, and we wish him well in his new post in Bangor. The post as AO for Cardiganshire has been taken over by Mr Mike Bailey (address as above) to whom all VC46 records should be sent.

NEW SOURCES OF INFORMATION

During the past few months we have received data from:

Caithness Community Programmes: covering 66 species, collected by M G Spirit, determined by Chris Felton, many species from a number of sites, during 1986.

Dungeness, Rye Harbour and Orford Ness Pitfall Trapping Programmes: 1989.

An Invertebrate Survey of a proposed Dungeness 'C' Station Study Area: recording 66 non-Linyphiid and 33 Linyphiid species, including 13 Red Data Book & Notable species. NCC 1991.

Catalogue of the Linnaeus Greening Collection of British Spiders in the Warrington Museum: collected mostly between 1893 and 1900: identification revised by Chris Felton in 1986.

Provisional Catalogue of the Liverpool Museum British Spider Collection, curated by Chris Felton, April 1992, and including material collected by Doug Cowden, Ron Leighton, Steve Judd, Stan Dobson, Jim Wright, David Mackie, Ian Wallace, Chris Felton, the Welsh Peatland Survey, and many others.

We are delighted to receive these major sources of information, and would welcome copies (on loan or as a gift) similar to those above. We have also received the 1991 Checklist of the Spiders of Staffordshire that is largely the work of G Craig Slawson, edited by G Halfpenny and published by the City Museum & Art Gallery at Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent.

ILLUSTRATIONS: We have now run out of suitable illustrations for use in the SRS Newsletter, and it would be good to have a further supply. Suitable black-and-white line drawings would be most welcome.