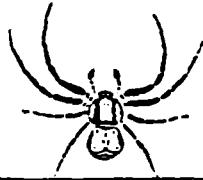


British Arachnological Society



SPIDER RECORDING SCHEME

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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 32.
November, 1998.

1. EDITORIAL.

1.1 Publication of the Provisional Distribution Maps.

Recorders will be sorry to learn that the publication of the provisional distribution maps, which we had been expecting late in 1999, has been delayed again, until 2001 or possibly even later. At my request Paul Harding, the Head of the Biological Records Centre, has contributed an article to this issue reviewing the progress of the SRS and setting out reasons for the delay. So, regrettably, the vast amount of information which we have accumulated since the scheme began in 1987 will now remain locked away for a few more years yet. But recording must continue as we strive to fill the gaps in our coverage of the country, and to generate text to accompany each map - points which Paul emphasises in his article. Generating text will be a big task. Little work has been done so far in the belief that such text would not be needed for the provisional maps, but would be included in the full Atlas when that was published a few years later.

1.2. The Newsletter.

Accompanying this issue are newsletters from the Pseudoscorpion and Harvestman Recording Schemes. These have been provided by the National Organisers of these schemes, Gerald Legg and Paul Hillyard, and they will in future be a regular feature of the November mailing.

1.3. News of Members.

a). We welcome the following new Recorder:

Mr. M.T. Sayers, 7 Cornstall Buildings, St Leonards Street, Stamford, Lincs., PE9 2HU.

b). Change of Address:

Ms. Kate Hawkins, 6 Lower Dukes Road, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM2 4BJ.

Miss I. M. Howe, 59 Huddersfield Road, Delph, Oldham, Lancs., OL3 5EG.

2. PROGRESS TOWARDS THE PROVISIONAL ATLAS OF SPIDERS. - Paul Harding. (Head, Biological Records Centre, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology)

Why does anyone want an Atlas ?

As a spider recorder, you would like, and deserve, to know how the recording scheme is progressing, where species have been recorded and where more recording is needed. But many other people also want to use the Atlas (and the data that the atlas will summarise), particularly in relation to nature conservation, and for assessing the importance of species for local site protection, for biogeographic research and for increasing awareness of and interest in spiders.

What should an atlas offer the user ?

Maps - Above all it should give an authoritative, comprehensive and meaningful summary of the known distribution of spiders. For this, the overall coverage of the recording needs to be good: for example, a minimum number of species recorded from more than 60% of the 10km squares in the

country. There are no settled rules for this type of threshold, but there is little point in publishing maps of all or most species in an atlas, when the majority of the maps will show more about the activity of the recorders than about the distribution of species.

Text - A set of maps with no explanatory text is of limited use to everyone except the most experienced and knowledgeable spider recorder. Other types of users require some explanation about a species and why it occurs everywhere, or just, say, in Sussex, Norfolk and Derbyshire. So we need some ecological notes on the species. Almost every atlas published by or on behalf of the Biological Records Centre (BRC) in the last 20 years has had explanatory text about the species mapped. This sort of text is all the more important for spiders because this information is not readily available in the standard British works.

Who is supporting the preparation of the atlas ?

BAS and spider recorders - The most important supporters are you the recorders - without your enthusiasm and ability to collect, identify and contribute records to the scheme there would be no data and no prospect of an atlas. Similarly the collection and collation of records would not happen without the National Scheme Organiser, David Nellist (and before him the late Clifford Smith), the Area Organisers and others, such as Stan Dobson, with responsibilities for other aspects of the success of the SRS. That gets us to the point where a lot of data exist on record cards and in several personal databases - then what ?

BRC - BRC's job is to bring all these data together, computerise the data on the cards, get it all into a single database, validate the data (in collaboration with the scheme organiser and others), manage the database, produce the maps, advise on the preparation of text, edit the text and see the atlas through to publication. BRC's role is dependent on resources being available, and funding from the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology (ITE) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

So what is the progress ?

SRS is making really good progress in view of the small number of recorders and the large number of species, many of which are difficult to identify. In earlier newsletters, it has been suggested that the Provisional Atlas of spiders will be published in 1999. This is now looking increasingly unlikely for various reasons. The following explains where we have got to and what is proposed and why.

Coverage from fieldwork - The geographical coverage of records is still quite patchy. Even with some 22,000 completed RA65 record cards (probably about 150,000 individual records of some 630 species) there is still a long way to go with recording in many areas of Britain. There needs to be a significant effort to get into areas from where there are presently few records.

Coverage from collections and the literature - David Nellist and I have discussed the need to get some information, at least for selected species, from the more important museum and personal collections and from the more recent and reliable literature. SRS does not need every record of Araneus diadematus but SRS should be sure that every available record of, say, Argiope bruennichi or Xysticus luctator has been put into the database.

Drafting the text - David Nellist has begun to assemble literature to help in the drafting of the species accounts, but he urgently needs help to make progress with the first draft of some text which can then go out to appropriate ecological, taxonomic and regional experts for their comments. It could take over a year just to prepare brief species accounts for most of the species.

Resources at BRC - BRC has been undergoing a great deal of change in recent years and has had less time and resources to devote to many of the national recording schemes that it had hoped to support, including SRS. ITE and JNCC are just about to sign a new 6-year partnership agreement for BRC which will enable it to bring increased appropriate resources to help societies and schemes, such as SRS, develop their own potential and get the results they deserve. It is early days yet but BRC hopes to be able to target work on the SRS data and atlas during 1999/2000 and 2000/2001.

Jam tomorrow, again ?

It may sound like this, but I hope you will agree that there are several good reasons for delaying the publication of the Provisional Atlas, probably until 2001. In the interim, BRC and David Nellist will look into the possibility of increasing the level of feedback on progress with recording

nationally, especially coverage, and we hope to include a few maps in future newsletters.

Finally, thank you for your contribution to the Spider Recording Scheme - long may it continue.

3. SHINGLE AND GRASSLAND SPIDERS ON HAVERGATE ISLAND. - Matthew Shardlow.
RSPB, East Anglia Office, Stalham House, 65 Thorpe Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 1UD.

Coastal Suffolk is an area of outstanding importance for spiders. The combination of shingle, saltmarsh, reedbed, coastal grassland, coastal heaths, sand dunes and geographical position contributes to a unique and internationally important spider fauna, including at least six RDB species. Havergate Island, one of the RSPB's Suffolk reserves and an NNR, with an area of some 108ha, is situated in the estuary of the River Ore and is important for its breeding birds, coastal vegetation and saline lagoon fauna. As part of the RSPB's Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (BMP) it was decided that the spider fauna of the island should be regularly sampled to check for the presence and distribution of six key species - Euophrys browni (RDB3), Haplodrassus minor (RDB3), Trichoncus affinis (RDB2), Sitticus inexpectus [= rupicola] (Na), Baryphma duffeyi (RDB3) and Enoplognatha mordax (Na). Coastal grassland and shingle habitats were investigated to see if there were differences in the spider fauna. Although methodologies are not comparable it is possible to put the spider fauna of the island into context using the 1994 survey of Orford Ness by the British Arachnological Society [Nellist, D.R., *A Survey of the Spiders of Orford Ness on the 18th. and 19th. June, 1994*, Unpublished Report, BAS] .

Six pitfall traps were placed randomly in each of three grassland habitats (long grass and bare patches; scraped baked clay; long grass). Fisher shingle traps were used to sample fauna moving in the shingle interstices, in five areas (including disturbed, vegetated and tideline shingle). Traps were run for 3 weeks, for three periods ending on 4th. May, 1st. June and sometime during September, 1997. In addition a small amount of hand collecting and sweep netting was carried out by Stephen Denny and Bill Welstead on the 2nd. May and 18th. August 1997.

1579 spiders were identified of 67 species. Twenty of these species were not found on the NNR during a survey by Morris and Parsons in 1992, and were not recorded on Orford Ness in 1994. Of the target species three of the six were recorded. Five specimens of Haplodrassus minor were trapped, two in the shingle trap on the tide line and three in the pitfall traps on Long Meadow (long grass and bare patches). Twelve specimens of Trichoncus affinis were taken. Eight of these were in vegetated shingle, but two were found in disturbed shingle and two in the pitfall trap on the tide line. A single specimen of Sitticus inexpectus was taken in the pitfall on the tide line. Of particular interest was the following list of eleven gnaphosid spiders recorded during the survey: Drassodes lapidosus (local), Drassodes cupreus (common), Haplodrassus minor (RDB3), Drassyllus lutetianus (Na), Drassyllus pusillus (local), Zelotes electus (local), Zelotes latreillei (local), Zelotes apricorum (local), Zelotes subterraneus (local), Zelotes petrensis (Na) and Gnaphosa lugubris (Na).

A scoring system was used to determine the Species Quality Indices (SQIs) for the spider assemblages in which points were allocated to each species depending on its status (32 for RDB, 16 for Na, 8 for Nb, 2 for local and 1 for common). Lists of species were scored, summed and then divided by the number of species trapped in that habitat to give the SQI. While only part of the assessment of any site, SQIs can be used to provide an indication of the quality of the assemblage of any biological group and, for example, a high SQI is a good indication that there is an assemblage, or individual species, that are worth considering when managing a site. A review by Ball [Ball, S. G., *The Importance of the Invertebrate Fauna of Thorne and Hatfield Moors; An Exercise in Site Evaluation*, Thorne and Hatfield Papers, 3, 34-65, 1992], of invertebrates caught in pitfall traps, listed 48 sites with SQIs ranging from 1.3 to 2.9. The 1994 Orford Ness survey produced a spider SQI of 3.6, close to the overall SQI of 3.37 recorded for Havergate. The SQI of 4.42, recorded for the shingle habitats on Havergate, is exceptionally high and potentially the highest spider SQI yet recorded in Britain. If there are any higher SQIs it would be interesting to

hear about them. An SQI of 2.62 for the grassland area compares well with good natural habitats, such as the Mid-Yare Valley, which has an SQI of 2.23. Certainly the spider fauna of the shingle is of high national, and probable international, importance, but the same does not apply to the grassland fauna.

Clearly Havergate Island has a very important spider fauna with a species content markedly skewed towards rarity. This situation highlights the fact that biodiversity is about more than species richness. Havergate shingle is species poor but rarity rich. The island is situated in the estuary of a river system and, as such, its status is dynamic in the long term. Careful management of this dynamism will ensure that habitat for the saltmarsh and shingle species remains available on the site. Monitoring of the spider populations will continue and this will inform us of the success, or otherwise, of our management.

[Note: Further trapping in 1998 has so far added the following species to the Havergate list; Euophrys browningi (RDB3), Meioneta simplicitaris (Na) and Agraecina striata (Nb)].

3. Theridion pinastri (L. Koch) NEW TO HERTFORDSHIRE - David Carr
40 The Maples, Harlow, Essex, CM19 4QZ.

With the site at Lippitts Hill, Epping Forest, Essex, where I had found Theridion pinastri in 1992, being approximately 8 miles away across the Lea Valley, the likelihood that the species occurred in the Broxbourne Woods NNR seemed high. However, habitat similar to that at Lippitts Hill with widely spaced oaks on grassland, I have found to be very limited at Broxbourne Woods. A small area of heath that had escaped becoming conifer plantation in Broxbourne Wood itself (TL 324073) appeared the most likely place to find the species. This area had several variously sized, widely spaced oaks on short, heathy-type grassland with a large patch of blackthorn and silver birch scrub. The whole site is surrounded by a conifer plantation.

On the 29th. May 1998, I was beating the outer branches of the oaks and a single, immature male was taken from a moderately sized tree. The spider was kept in a tube and fed on greenfly until it matured on the 8th. June 1998. Articles in BAS Newsletters No. 67 (Peter Harvey, David Carr and Helen Read), and No. 75 (David Carr and Peter Harvey) describe Theridion pinastri as being taken from deciduous trees at three sites in Essex, and at Burnham Beeches, where in each case there were no pines present. The Broxbourne Wood record differs in that although taken from oak, the wood is predominantly coniferous.

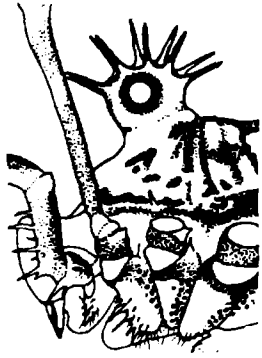
4. Argiope bruennichi (Scopoli) IN SURREY - David Baldock
Nightingales, Haslemere Road, Milford, Surrey, GU8 5BN.

On the 4th. October 1998 I was searching for Roesel's Bush-cricket (Metrioptera roeselii) in a south-facing, overgrown, grass field in Milford. As I was leaving I saw a female Argiope bruennichi on her web. I had seen this spider in France on various occasions but never in England. I returned three days later but failed to find any more specimens as the weather was windy and cold. However I did find a dozen egg-sacs in a small area of the field. I opened one of these and found it to be full of well-grown spiderlings, which already had faint stripes on the abdomen.

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My thanks go to those who have supplied notes and information for this issue. Newsletter No. 33 will be published in March 1999 and I do need contributions for that. So, do please send in your articles and notes as soon as possible. Thank you.

David R. Nellist.
National Organiser
"Roundwood", 198A Park Street Lane, Park Street, St Albans, Herts., AL2 2AQ.



OCULARIUM

No. 1

Newsletter of the Opiliones Recording Scheme

(New Series)

November 1998

Editor: Paul Hillyard

c/o The Natural History Museum

Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD Tel: 0171 938 8832 Email: pdh@nhm.ac.uk

Welcome

to the new series of *Newsletters* for the Opiliones (Harvestman) Recording Scheme. I hope you will find them interesting and informative and I strongly encourage you to contribute articles and observations. The harvestmen themselves are an absorbing group to study and easy to develop an affection for - even arachnophobic people are not afraid of them!

I thank all those industrious collectors who submitted records during the last four years (see over) and I apologise for the lack of a *Newsletter* during that time. I am grateful to Mr David Nellist, National Organiser of the Spider Recording Scheme, for all his help, without which, this edition may never have appeared.

Some changes have been made following the first series of *Newsletters*. This edition, the first in the new series, recaps and brings up-to-date some of the material that John Sankey introduced.

I hope now to encourage you all to do plenty of recording so that we can achieve a better coverage of the UK and to fill in the gaps, in particular: Wales, East Anglia, Southern Uplands of Scotland, Northern Scotland, Scottish Islands, Northern Ireland and a stretch of country from North Dorset to Somerset and North Devon. *Ed.*

JOHN H. P. SANKEY (1917-1995)

An obituary which makes a fitting tribute to John Sankey, who was our leading expert on harvestmen and the original organiser of the Recording Scheme, as well as Warden of Juniper Hall Field Centre, may be found in: *Field Studies* 8 (1996): 529-32. The obituary is written by David Streeter who remembers John with great affection, as indeed do I and many others. In *Newsletter* No. 5, John referred to the leg which I [Paul Hillyard] had broken when running on Box Hill - he wrote: "Tripped over a *Trogulus* I suspect, but we hope he will shortly regain the agility of a *Leiobunum*!"

John's courteous and rapid responses to enquiries were much appreciated. One recorder [Mike Davidson] recalled: "Years ago I found myself near Juniper Hall

and out of the blue called John up. I was promptly invited to lunch and taken on a tour of Box Hill and shown all the local arachnological specialities. Nothing ever seemed to be too much trouble."

John Sankey's last *Newsletter* for the Opiliones Recording Scheme was issued in July 1994 (No. 13).

THE OPILIONES RECORDING SCHEME

The ORS began in 1973 when the first recording cards (RA27) were produced. The Scheme is jointly administered by the British Arachnological Society (BAS) and the Biological Records Centre (BRC, head: Paul Harding) which is based at the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, Cambs PE17 2LS. The purpose of the ORS is to record the geographical distribution of harvestmen in Britain and to publish this information in the form of maps based on the 10km squares of the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The 2nd edition of the Opiliones Atlas should eventually be published and, ultimately, the records will form a database that can be accessed to provide species information on particular sites and also present useful data for studies on climate change and biodiversity.

New cards are available free of charge from the BRC. As recorders, would you please complete the cards yourself and send them to Paul Hillyard for checking as National Organiser (address above). It is also important to send in any doubtful specimens. The BRC is able to receive records on disk from any database, that can output in ASCII format, but the records need to be first validated by the National Organiser.

Paul Harding has reported that the following records are presently held at BRC:

11244 records fully computerised and validated (cited in the 1988 *Provisional Atlas*).
590 records computerised and validated since 1988.
c 5000 records on disks (need checking).
c 2250 records on RA27 cards (need checking).

In addition, Paul Hillyard holds 750 cards which have produced 2100 records presently stored on disk (in Stan Dobson's OPIREC programme). The total number of records is now approaching double that of the 1988 *Provisional Atlas*.

THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY NETWORK

The Biological Records Centre is one of the participating groups in the slowly developing National Biodiversity Network. The NBN co-ordinates the work of existing institutions to link up the information contained in the UK's various collections and databases. Their website provides access to the services: <http://www.nbn.org.uk>

QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire similar to the one sent out to members of the Spider Recording Scheme in 1997 will be distributed to past and present members of the Opiliones Recording Scheme between now and the next issue of the *Newsletter*. The main purpose of the questionnaire will be to find out from people the level of their past and present collecting/recording activity and whether they are willing to support the scheme in the future. An up-to-date list of the active members will then accompany the issue of the next *Newsletter*.

NEWS of MEMBERS

Many thanks to the following recorders for submitting records during the last four years:

Mike Davidson, A.E.Cooper, Paul Griffiths, Ray Ruffell, Martin Cawley, Wayne Rixom, Jon Daws, Martin George, Paul Lee, Douglas Richardson, Richard Wilson, Gordon Corbett, Michael Hogg, Helen Read, Peter Smithers, John Hunnisett, Ian Evans, John Buckley, T.J.Thomas and Doug Cowden.

If anybody's name has been missed, please contact the editor for the next issue.

HARVESTMAN NEW to BRITAIN: *Centetostoma*

As reported in earlier *Newsletters*, Peter Smithers and Michael Hogg discovered in 1990, in the vicinity of an old quarry and railway line in SW Devon, a number of strange-looking specimens belonging to the genus *Centetostoma* (family Nemastomatidae). The male's genitalia compared with *C. bacilliferum* of N Spain, were significantly different. But specimens collected by Richard Abbott from Bordeaux presented intermediate forms which suggested that this is a species which shows considerable variation. In the absence of any other evidence, the intention is to publish a description of the British specimens under the name of *Centetostoma bacilliferum*. This species now brings the total number of harvestmen known in Britain up to 24.

FURTHER SPECIES to LOOK OUT FOR

Nemastoma lugubre

A paper by Meidell & Stol (1990) draws attention to the similarities and differences of the two species: *Nemastoma bimaculatum* and *Nemastoma lugubre*. The latter is not recorded in Britain but there is a chance that it has been overlooked, particularly in

eastern regions. Males of the two species are easily distinguished by the form of the penis, the cheliceral apophysis and the palpal tibia (curvature and dentition). Furthermore, in *N.bimaculatum* the female body is only slightly denticulate and has a more or less flattened appearance. In *N.lugubre* the female body is strongly denticulate and appears relatively globular.

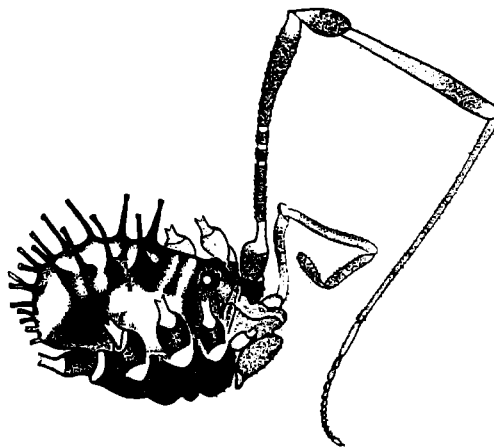
Meidell, B. A. & Stol, I. 1990: Distribution of *Nemastoma bimaculatum* (Fabricius, 1775) and *N. lugubre* (Muller, 1776) (Opiliones) in Norway, with a discussion on "east-west pairs of species". *Fauna norv.* Ser. B, 37:1-8.

Opilio canestrinii

Dr Jochen Martens informs us that *Opilio canestrinii* is spreading in Germany. It is a species often associated with gardens and walls and might be easily introduced into this country via eggs in soil, or as live harvestmen among plants. *O.canestrinii* differs from our two resident species of *Opilio* in lacking the small stout tubercles dorsally and ventrally on the palpal femur. It has two well-marked carinal lines on the shaft of the male organ. Keep a look out for this species! [repeated from *Newsletter* No. 5, July 1986]

Dicranopalpus ramosus

At the time of the *Provisional Atlas* (1988), this introduced species had colonised parts of southern England and Wales as far north as Essex and Cardigan. Since then, further records have tracked its spread north and it is now known to have reached Norwich. Can anyone confirm the rumour that has reached Cheshire?



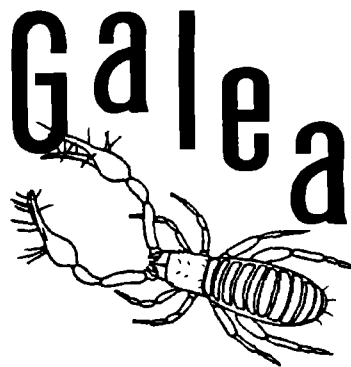
Centetostoma bacilliferum from Devon

OTHER ITEMS

HARVESTMEN (1989) Synopses of the British Fauna No. 4 (2nd edition) by Hillyard & Sankey. Copies available from the editor (address above) at the reduced price of £15 (inc. post & packing)

WEBSITE for the Opiliones Recording Scheme is to be found on the British Arachnological Society's internet pages: <http://www.salticus.demon.co.uk>

Newsletter No. 2 will be published in November 1999. Contributions received before then will be most welcome.



— Newsletter of the Pseudoscorpion Recorders Group —

No. 1

November 1998

Editor: Gerald Legg

Contributions to me c/o The Booth Museum of Natural History, 194 Dyke Road, Brighton, BN1 5AA; e-mail booth-mus@pavilion.co.uk

Welcome to all those fascinated by pseudoscorpions and to the rest of you who have to be converted to loving these endearing invertebrates.

Once seen, never forgotten. Having watched people discover their first pseudoscorpion I know that these creatures hold a fascination which is quite different from that shown for any other terrestrial invertebrate. What is it that makes them so interesting and intriguing? Is it their shape; odd scorpion-like pedipalps; the way they walk, sensing the environment ahead with their palps; their ability to run as fast backwards as forwards? Or what? They certainly have some unique habits amongst our arachnids: spinning 'nests' in which to aestivate, moult and have their young; feeding their young with milk and later regurgitated food; dancing; and many more. And - there are only 27 species in Britain! [That we know of - more of that later].

This and subsequent *Newsletters* will help to spread the pseudoscorpion word as well as provide a chance to discover things about them and to encourage YOU to find them thus helping us to understand their distribution and ecology. Such information is vital to help our understanding of the biodiversity (excuse the cliché) of Britain and Ireland.

What is most important, this is NOT my *Newsletter*, but YOURS. Contributions, no matter how small, will be welcome.

Editor

Neobisium (Neobisium) maritimum (Leach 1812) (Neobisiidae) a pseudoscorpion new to Scotland

On 8th October 1997 a single specimen of the pseudoscorpion *Neobisium maritimum* was collected from under an embedded rock in an outcrop on the middle shore zone, North Newton, Lochranza, Isle of Arran (NR933517, VC 100). The shore at North Newton is relatively exposed, lacking extensive seaweed cover and the zone in which *N. maritimum* was found is dominated by the barnacle *Semibalanus balanoides* (L.).

This is the first Scottish record of this scarce littoral species which occurs sporadically along the west coast of England and Wales as far north as the Isle of Man. Consequently, this find represents a considerable expansion of its range. Currently this is the most northerly specimen known, although it is likely that it may be found elsewhere on the north-west coast of Scotland and England, possibly in the middle shore zone. This species also occurs in the upper and splash zones of the shore. In Europe it occurs on the western coast of Ireland and France.

My thanks to Gerald for confirming the specimen and for providing additional information.

Alex Ramsay, Dryfemount, Dundas Street, Bo'ness, West Lothian EH51 0DG

Alex Ramsay

Irish Records

An updated and detailed account of our current knowledge of the Irish pseudoscorpion fauna was published recently in the *Bulletin of the Irish Biogeographical Society* (1998 20, 105-126). It is clear from this that the distribution reflects the activities of collectors and by no means a true picture of the Irish fauna. A common picture with the distribution of many groups! Consequently, Irish records in particular would be very useful.

Send records, and or specimens for identification, to the Editor who will add the information to the National database, forward details to Jim O'Connor and of course return your specimens.

'New Species' - What can I find?

New species to Britain are still out there to be discovered! Already in the past year or so two have been added to the British list - that's an increase in the number of pseudoscorpions in Britain of nearly 10%. The distribution of these two species also needs to be investigated further .

1. *Larca lata*

Found: 1982, recognised 1996

Delving into a rot hole in a fallen decaying oak in the Cranbourne Forest area of Windsor Great Park, a few handfuls of dry nest material were found and removed. Using Tullgren funnels a number of pseudoscorpions were collected. Never assume anything is what you expect it to be! These I identified as being *Chelifer cancroides* - a species I had only seen once before. As a result the specimen was used in the main illustration for this species in the *Linnean Synopsis* (Legg, G. & Jones, R.E., No. 40 1988). However, the eagle eye of Mark Judson noticed that the illustration was not *Chelifer* but resembled *Larca lata*. Mark examined the material and confirmed that this was the case and was also able to describe the protonymph which had not been seen before.

This discovery raises two points. One, don't assume that just because there are few species (in 1995 only 25) to be found in this order, that your's must be so-and-so. If in any doubt CHECK. And two, yes there are now 27 species on the British list and if YOU keep looking there could be 28, 29, 30 ...

A full account of *Larca lata*, one of Europe's 'rarest and most enigmatic species' (Judson 1996) appears in *Bull. Br. arachnol. Soc* 10 (6), 205-210). It appears to like dry habitats especially birds' and mice nests. As Mark suggests, perhaps it is phoretic on parasitic insects particularly mosquitoes (a phoretic female has been caught attached to a mosquito near a nest). So get out there and look!

2. *Microbisium brevifemoratum*

Found: 1997

This creature likes old, cold, acid bogs and was found in *Sphagnum* in the north of England. A full account by Mark Judson is awaiting publication in the BAS Bulletin.

And others ...

Look into more nests. Although these have been

fairly well examined I'm sure something could turn up. Try sea bird nests for starters (but don't break your neck, and, don't fall foul of the Wildlife and Countryside Act!).

Mammal nests could also prove interesting. On continental Europe the magnificent *Lasiochernes pilosa* pals up with moles, living in their nests'. Careful examination of mole bedding (don't hurt the moles!) could possibly yield specimens. The south of England may be a better place to start looking since this species may be here on the extreme edge of its northerly range which on the Continent extends to Eastern France, Germany and Luxemburg. Some years ago I looked for this species but perhaps too far north to find any.

Try different sampling/trapping techniques

From my experiences it seems that the way we get our specimens strongly influences what we find. Fairly obvious really I know, but this simple and common place idea was brought home to me when sampling tropical forest soil and using Tullgrens to extract the arthropods. What in the literature were listed as rare turned up in droves. Similarly with pseudoscorpions in the UK. *Dinocheirus panzeri* by the bath load from Tullgren extraction of old pigeons' nest debris and similarly *Cheiridium museorum* from barns.

Deep pitfall traps, used by coleopterist, could yield something interesting. So far *Chthonius ischnocheles* has dropped into one, but may be there are others waiting to be found.

Branch traps and all manner of other devices laid in habitats not often examined could yield interesting specimens. We'll look at some of these in more detail in a later Newsletter - please drop me a note of any ideas YOU have or methods you use.

Larca lata and *Neobisium maritimum*, original drawings by Richard Jones (modified from *Lin. Soc. Synopsis* No. 40)

That's all folks! happy hunting

