

OPILIONES (HARVEST-SPIDER) RECORDING SCHEME

Newsletter No. 12 - August 1993

A piece of advice on collecting *Dicranopalpus ramosus* comes from Paul Hicks now in Scotts Head, New South Wales, Australia: "Firstly thank you for continuing to keep me on the mailing list for your Harvestmen News Letter, which I greatly enjoy I was interested to read what Kevin Hughes says about *Dicranopalpus*. When, in the early 70's I was trying to establish its boundaries in Clacton I would take a white sheet with me, knock on the door of a house with a hedge in the front garden and ask if I could "shake" their hedge. I always felt that 'beat' was an emotive word and likely to produce a refusal. I always got co-operation and plenty of specimens (if it was a privet hedge)". Kevin wrote in Newsletter No. 11 1992.

Anelasmacephalus cambridgei new for Ireland. John Daws reports: "I spent a day walking through the gap of Dunloe in Killarney turning over rocks and pieces of wood looking for woodlice and harvestmen. The previous week the weather had been very wet and the ground was saturated, with standing water everywhere; 20th May 1992. I had so far found *Mitostoma chrysomelas*, *Nemastoma bimaculatum* and *Rilaena triangularis*, when, on rolling over a very large rock, I caught sight of what I first took to be a large mite. On closer inspection, I realised it was a specimen of *Anelasmacephalus cambridgei*. I posted the specimen to John Sankey who confirmed the identification and said he was not aware of any other Irish records. It could have been a closely related species - well, one can dream!"

The Juniper Hall Field Centre, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6BY is offering a weekend course on harvestmen from Friday, 10th - Sunday 12th of September 1993. Identification, ecology and natural history will form the bulk of this informal course, which everyone interested in harvestmen is invited to attend, whether beginner or experienced student. Paul Hillyard of the Natural History Museum and co-author of the Linnean Society's Synopsis of the British Fauna No. 4 - Harvestmen plans to join us. The cost including full residence is £85 (£82 for members of the Field Studies Council); if you live within easy reach of the Centre the fee for non-residents is £55 plus any meals taken in the Centre. Full details may be had from the Warden at the above address; telephone 0306-883849.

We still have no ruling on *Centetostoma*. Peter Smithers writes from Plymouth: "I contacted English China Clays who informed me that contrary to my information there is no traffic between Spain and their depot at Parr in Cornwall (see Newsletter No. 11, 1991), but they do have a link between Spain and the depot in Plymouth. Excited by this more direct link I arranged to visit the Plymouth depot in mid-September (1992) but alas no sign of the elusive beast. My annual inspection of the known sites revealed a reduction in the population in the railway cutting but an increase in the population at Efford Fort Wood. The initial population seemed to be restricted to the end of a rock strewn gully with a deep litter layer. This year it was located throughout the gully and under stones in the wood. A single specimen was also found under a stone at the foot of a Devon hedge some two fields distant from the wood, thus hinting that it is more widely distributed than it first appears to be".

Brian Eversham informs us that the second edition of the Provisional Atlas of the Harvest spiders has been delayed, due to pressures of other work. Over the last two years, there has

been a large increase in research applications using the Biological Records Centre (BRC) database. BRC staff are now working on such themes as the impacts of climate change on wildlife, maximising the environmental benefits of agricultural set-aside, and understanding biodiversity. I hope recorders will be pleased to know that their valuable records are being put to good use. If any recorder would like to know more about the other work of BRC, Brian would be happy to send you a copy of our general newsletter; let him know if you would like one. It is unfortunate that a spin-off from spending more time on research is that BRC cannot always provide the prompt and comprehensive service to recorders that they would wish.

It is now hoped that the Atlas will appear toward the end of the year.

We look forward to the appearance of the Atlas and are most grateful to all the recorders who have contributed so much information, which has enabled this second edition to be produced.

Our annual newsletter is a forum for interesting observations, hints and help on identification, suggestions, complaints, congratulations, books and papers on anything to do with harvest-spiders. Do let's have your contribution.

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and thanks to Paul Harding and Brian Eversham as annually and ever.

I live at 3 Glenrose, Mickleham, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6BY (0306-883205) and now have *Dicranopalpus* in my garden!