

OPILIONES (HARVEST-SPIDER) RECORDING SCHEME

Newsletter No. 4 - April 1985

Mitopus ericaeus

During the past year I have looked at hundreds more harvest-spiders. Douglas Richardson of Skipton has been particularly helpful in supplying a long series of Mitopus, some of which are ericaeus, the recent discovery of Dr Amanda Jennings and now confirmed by Professor Jochen Martens who writes that he took it in the French and Spanish Pyrenees in 1967 and 1984 but "... mistreated the series always as morio". He suggests that its distribution pattern may be similar to Sabacon viscayanum ssp. ramblaianum and Paroligolophus meadii. We are trying to sort out some former records of M. morio from high localities; perhaps if they are labelled var. alpinus we ought to plot them as ericaeus. Thanks to all of you who have sent records and specimens; your co-operation is most valuable.

The Linnean Society Synopsis no. 4 (Opiliones) revision

This is really a rewrite and is well advanced. We ask anyone with more records to let us have them as soon as possible so that the distribution maps may be as complete as possible; please send direct to Paul Harding at Monks Wood Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, Cambs PE17 2LS or to me. I am willing to check specimens - see Newsletter No. 3.

Sabacon viscayanum ssp. ramblaianum

I have still not managed to get to South Wales to look for this interesting species, but thanks to Cynthia Merrett of the National Museum of Wales at Cardiff I have seen a specimen taken near Cardiff. My thanks to her and to Joan Raum for all their hard work trying to find out more about this curious species.

A weekend with harvest-spiders

This is the title of a course to be tutored by me at the Juniper Hall Field Centre, Dorking, Surrey; 6-8 September (Friday evening to Sunday evening); only £50. Write to the Warden for details. If you have problems with identification, want to discuss difficulties or to know how to start to study the group do come to this weekend. I hope a number of recorders will turn up and that we can get together on an informal basis. I hope too to try out some new keys and discuss the rewritten synopsis before it goes to print - we hope - fairly soon afterwards. Do come along. I might add that I hope to be around when Frances Murphy runs her 'Beginning the study of Spiders' course at the Centre, 5-7 July, so if you have time do come up to see me at 3 Glenrose, just a stone's throw from Juniper Hall - that is, for anyone coming on this course.

Unusual

I have had a pet Nemastoma bimaculatum for six months; his or her dorsum, except for the rear end of the abdomen is China white! Perhaps a one-off aberration, or maybe a gene floating around in the local population which I must sample again soon. I found it on Box Hill not far from where we have seen the all-black unicolor variety. What fun if we could cross the two variations - can you imagine a grey N. bimaculatum?

Do let's have lots more records for the distribution maps.

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All records for inclusion in the new edition of the Linnean Society Synopsis must reach Paul Harding (Monks Wood Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, Cambs PE17 2LS) or me by 30 September 1985 at the latest.

A weekend with harvest-spiders

This is the title of a course to be tutored by me at the Louisa Hall Field Centre, Dorking, Surrey; 8-9 September (Friday evening to Sunday evening); only £30. Write to the Warden for details. If you have problems with identification, want to discuss difficulties or to know how to start to study the group do come to this weekend. I hope a number of recorders will turn up and that we can get together on an informal basis. I hope too to try out some new keys and discuss the written synopses before it goes to print - we hope - fairly soon afterwards to come along. I might add that I hope to be around when Frances Burry runs her 'beginning the study of spiders' course at the Centre, 8-7 July, so if you have time do come up to see me at 3 Glenrose, just a stone's throw from Louisa Hall - that is, for anyone coming on this course.