

THE COLEOPTERIST'S NEWSLETTER

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UNFORTUNATELY I made an error on the list of name changes effecting Leiodes in the last issue, the following was omitted:

Leiodes nigrita Schmidt, 1841

= scita sensu auct Brit, sensu Reitter, neo Erichson.

Some confusion might have resulted from the incomplete list as it would appear that the scita in Kloet & Hincks has been synonymised with ovalis, and both are synonyms of ferruginea. This is not the case. Sorry for any confusion.

J.C.

THE HABITAT OF ORCHESIA UNDULATA Kr. (MELANDRYIDAE)

Having recently discovered this beetle on the Cotswolds, I have been re-examining my past encounters with it. During the last four years I have found it on fifteen occasions, and two common features are striking. The localities all come under one of the following three headings:- semi-natural woodland, old parkland or else secondary or plantation in origin but continuous with either of the other two habitat types. The other feature is that oak is invariably the predominant canopy-forming tree - this is not to say that the beetle is only found in dead oak timber. I have found it beneath bark on birch, and beech also, and David Atty (Coleoptera of Gloucestershire) also mentions ash and spruce; but in each of my localities the dead wood in question lay within oak woodland.

Rather than publish these rather tentative conclusions, I thought I'd throw them open here for comment. Has anyone, for

example, found it in beech woodland ? It seems truly absent from the Cotswold beechwoods, and I've not found it in the chalk beech woods of the south east. How about ash woods ? It has certainly been found within ash and beech dead timber within oak woodland. Birch woods are another possibility.

Keith Alexander.

(I have found it in West Sussex beech woodlands around Goodwood and Arundel. Does anyone have a copy of Palm's excellent treatise "Die Holz- und Rinden-Käfer der Süd- und Mittelschwedischen Laubbäume" - generally a good reference for the habits of any timber associated beetle). J.C.

THE SPECIALIST FAUNA OF CALCAREOUS GRASSLANDS --

I am trying to produce a graded list of the specialist beetles of calcareous grassland - chalk, limestone and shelly sands - as an aid to the comparative assessment of sites for nature conservation. The aim is to construct a list of species which are thought to occur mainly on high quality sites, sites which have a long and uninterrupted history of traditional management as rough pasture, and which have been little "improved" agriculturally. Such a list would prove invaluable in my work by providing a framework for comparative assessment of sites, to give a reasonable basis for deciding upon management priorities. Such a list would also be of great use to non-specialists working in nature conservation when confronted by long species lists for particular localities.

It would also be informative to pick out which species are restricted to the limestone areas, or to the chalk downland of the south-east, or to coastal sites only, and so bring together the very scattered information in the literature

and private notebooks on this very interesting assemblage of species. Other groups of insects include limestone specialities, for example the silky wave moth (Idaea dilutaria) and Thyme Pug (Eupithecia distinctaria) and the bug Macroplax pressleyi. Are there beetles too?

I would be grateful if other Coleopterists would enter the discussion; of species to be included; their range across Britain's calcareous grasslands; the value of any such list, and so on. What do you think? Any comments no matter how brief will be very welcome.

My list so far is as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <u>Calathus ambiguus</u> | <u>H. melleti</u> |
| <u>Platyderus ruficollis</u> | <u>H. parallelus</u> |
| <u>Amara praetermissa</u> | <u>H. dimidiatus</u> |
| <u>A. montivaga</u> | <u>H. honestus</u> |
| <u>A. equestris</u> | <u>H. tenebrosus</u> |
| <u>Harpalus azureus</u> | <u>H. attenuatus</u> |
| <u>H. sabulicola</u> | <u>Licinus punctatulus</u> |
| <u>H. obscurus</u> | <u>L. depressus</u> |
| <u>H. ardosiacus</u> | <u>Panagaeus bipustulatus</u> |
| <u>H. punctatulus</u> | <u>Callistus lunatus</u> |
| <u>H. rupicola</u> | <u>Lebia cyanocephala</u> |
| <u>H. schaubergerianus</u> | <u>Cymindis axillaris</u> |
| <u>H. puncticollis</u> | <u>Brachinus crepitans</u> |
| <u>Homaloplia ruricola</u> | |
| <u>Heptaulacus villosus</u> | |
| <u>Aphodius putridus</u> | |
| <u>Drilus flavescens</u> | |
| <u>Meligethes brevis</u> | |
| <u>M. solidus</u> | |

Aphanisticus pusillusBruchidius cistiClytra laeviusculaCryptocephalus aureolusC. bilineatusC. hypochaeridisC. primariusChrysolina hypericiC. violaceaGaleruca tanacetiPhyllotreta nodicornisAphthona atrovirensA. herbigradaApion atomariumA. cineraceumA. filirostreA. flavimanumA. intermediumA. ononicolaA. ononisA. reflexumA. sediA. stolidumA. waltoniBaris picicornisBrachysomus hirtusCeuthorhynchus geographicusC. moelleriLongitarsus anchusaeL. curtusL. exoletusL. fowleriL. nigrofasciatusL. obliteratedusL. pellucidusL. tabridusAltica pusillaMantura matthewsiC. resedaeC. trimaculatusC. unguicularisCionus hortulanusC. longicollisC. nigritarsisMiarus campanulaeM. degorsiM. graminisM. microsM. plantarumOtiorhynchus ligusticiPhyllobius viridicollisTrachyploeus alternansTychius schneideri

On the assumption that destructive criticism is easier than constructive, I've left a number of my own "doubtfuls" on the list, to stimulate comment!

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HOLIDAYS With the address supplied by Prof. Owen in the last "Newsletter" and after a conversation with Alan Stubbs, I thought it might be a good idea to ask readers for any information - addresses, good places for collecting, which parts of woods/meadows/beaches/riverbanks to aim for, and indeed places not worth bothering with if time is short. Such information will be very useful when visiting unfamiliar areas or when on holiday. The idea can be extended for trips abroad - local difficulties, best season, best type of accommodation, tips for packing the catch etc.

Perhaps I can start the ball rolling by mentioning a good tip I came across when planning a family holiday in France. The "Gite de France" system is excellent for self-contained self catering (= broadly speaking rural cottages/houses). Ours cost £90 for two weeks in May 1981 (cf two weeks in Cornwall 1982 for a rather tatty cottage at £198 electricity extra). It slept 5 and all gas, water electricity was included. Gites are available from the French Tourist Office in London, but my advice is to send to the individual Departmental Tourist Offices in France. The list you will get is far longer and prices are a little cheaper. May seems a little early for the Dordogne, but in the next Department south = Lot = there was an abundance of beetles in the flower-rich meadows (10 Anthaxia in one sweep).

J.Cooter.

BEETLES AT THE TOP OF HILLS.

Last May, I spent a few hours on the tops of some Perthshire hills far from any fermenting fruit and many miles from the nearest public convenience. I was accompanied, as often, by my son David, who among other things, stops me getting lost. We visited the tops of Ben Lawers, Meall nan Tarmachan, Ben More at Crianlarich, Ben Lui and Mealle Buidhe. Eschewing the more conventional searching under stones, we seived moss turning up some 600 beetles comprising 69 species. Those readers who have yet to sample mountain air may be interested in what we found:

(* = northern species. ** = montane species)

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|----|
| * <u>Nebria gyllenhali</u> | 12 | <u>Lathrobium fulvipenne</u> | 2 |
| * <u>Notiophilus aestuans</u> | 1 | <u>Othius angustus</u> | 12 |
| <u>N. aquaticus</u> | 1 | <u>O. myrmecophilus</u> | 8 |
| <u>N. biguttatus</u> | 2 | ** <u>Gabrius scoticus</u> | 8 |
| <u>N. germyi</u> | 4 | <u>G. subnigritulus</u> | 2 |
| <u>Loricera pilicornis</u> | 1 | <u>Quecicus boopoides</u> | 3 |
| * <u>Patrobus assimilis</u> | 15 | <u>Q. boeps</u> | 16 |
| ** <u>P. septentrionis</u> | 1 | * <u>Q. curtrennis</u> | 1 |
| <u>Calathus melanocephalus</u> | 12 | <u>Q. molochinus</u> | 1 |
| * <u>Trichocellus cognatus</u> | 2 | <u>Q. umbrinus</u> | 3 |
| * <u>Olophrum fuscon</u> | 1 | <u>Q. nitidipennis</u> | 4 |
| <u>O. piceum</u> | 3 | <u>Mycetoporus angularis</u> | 2 |
| ** <u>Arpedium brachypterum</u> | 18 | * <u>M. bauderi</u> | 3 |
| * <u>Acidota crenata</u> | 4 | <u>M. punctus</u> | 1 |
| ** <u>Eudectus whitei</u> | 2 | ** <u>Bryoporus rugipennis</u> | 1 |
| <u>Anotylus rugosus</u> | 1 | <u>Tachyporus chrysomelinus</u> | 1 |
| <u>A. tetracarlinatus</u> | 1 | <u>Tachinus elongatus</u> | 2 |
| <u>Stenus brevipennis</u> | 1 | <u>T. marginellus</u> | 2 |
| <u>S. brunnipes</u> | 1 | <u>Cypha laeviuscula</u> | 2 |
| <u>S. impressus</u> | 1 | <u>Myllaena brevicornis</u> | 1 |
| <u>S. picipes</u> | 1 | <u>Soreophila islandica</u> | 15 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------|----|
| <u>Alconota gregaria</u> | 1 | <u>Aphodius ater</u> | 2 |
| <u>Amischa cavifrons</u> | 3 | <u>A. depressus</u> | 3 |
| <u>Liogluta nitidiuscula</u> | 2 | * <u>A. lapponum</u> | 3 |
| * <u>Philhygra arctica</u> | 11 | <u>A. sphacelatus</u> | 2 |
| <u>P. fallaciosa</u> | 3 | <u>Byrrhus fasciatus</u> | 10 |
| <u>Atheta harwoodi</u> | 1 | <u>B. pilula</u> | 27 |
| * <u>A. tibialis</u> | 262 | <u>Hypnoidus riparius</u> | 3 |
| <u>A. hypnorum</u> | 2 | <u>Dalopius marginatus</u> | 1 |
| <u>Dimetrota atramentaria</u> | 1 | <u>Coccinella hieroglyphica</u> | 1 |
| <u>Mniusa incrassata</u> | 34 | <u>Phytodecta pallida</u> | 1 |
| <u>Oxypoda procerula</u> | 6 | <u>Lochmaea suturalis</u> | 2 |
| ** <u>O. tirolensis</u> | 9 | * <u>Otiorhynchus arcticus</u> | 2 |
| | | * <u>O. nodosus</u> | 10 |
| | | <u>Notaris acridulus</u> | 1 |

To beetle collectors, the tops of Scottish hills are very different places from Windsor Forest or Richmond Park. To many beetles, there is apparently little difference; 48 of the species which we found at the tops of the hills are on the Windsor list. Of the remaining 17 species, about half may be classified as northern, occurring in Britain mainly but widely in the North of England and Scotland. Only six of the 65 species can really be considered montane, occurring rarely below 500m except in the extreme west of the Scottish mainland and in Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides. To give some idea of the relative incidence I have included in the table the total number of each species found, lumping together the counts for different hills because there were insufficient numbers to allow valid comparisons between sites. No doubt further sampling would increase the list of species and refine its spectrum but it would be unlikely to alter the general picture.

We have here yet another example of a remarkable assemblage of largely competitive species occupying, to our eyes, the same habitat. A few of the species (perhaps 10) may have been carried on to the tops of hills by wind but most almost certainly bred on the spot. One can only presume that there are many micro-habitats in what we call "moss". Here is a project for someone.

I can recommend looking for beetles at the tops of hills. You are not compelled to sieve moss. You can turn over stones or simply gather beetles running in the sunshine, as we picked up examples of Elaphrus lapponicus and Carabus nitens. Sometimes you will be in the sunshine with all below shrouded in mist. Then you will really feel on top of the world, even without beetles.

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PLEASE let me know if I have not sent a copy of Michael Darby's "Biography" questionnaire. I now have a stock of these for distribution. J.Cooter.

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