

# THE COLEOPTERIST'S NEWSLETTER

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With the first issue for 1983 come good wishes for the New Year (albeit rather belated). It is hoped that the coming season is most profitable to one and all.

HELP WANTED. Does anyone have any duplicate Carabidae, especially these species ?

Carabus granulatus, monilis.

Dyschirius politus, salinus, obscurus, angustatus.

Miscodera arctica. Patrobus assimilis. Perigonia nigriceps.

Trechus micros, fulvus, rivularis, secalis.

Bembidion nigropiceum, nigricorne, fumigatum, monticola, maritimum, fluviatile.

Pterostichus parumpunctatus, adstrictus, longicollis.

Agonum versutum. Trichocellus cognatus, placidus.

Amara strenua, tibialis, cursitans, fusca, spreata, famelica.

Harpalus puncticollis, punctulatus, rufibarbis, rufitarsis, servus, neglectus.

Bradycellus ruficollis, collaris, sharpi.

Acupalpus dorsalis, consputus.

Dromius longiceps, agilis, sigma, quadrisignatus, notatus.

A friend in Italy has asked if I can send examples of the above - others not listed, I have been able to send. By exchange, I can offer a selection of mostly southern species = Cassida murraea, Chrysolina menthastris,

Pediacus dermestoides, Bembidion semipunctatum, Dorcus, Nossidium pilosellum, and so on.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS - Several 1983 subs are outstanding. Anyone who has not paid will be assumed as not wanting the "Newsletter". Thank you to all those that have paid promptly.

Subscription for 1983 = £1.20p

Ceuthorhynchus pervicax Weise, an increasing species ?

My recent note on this very local weevil (1980, Entomologist's mon. Mag. 116: 256) refers to recent captures in Kent and Sussex. In some of its localities it is plentiful, indeed may be taken where ever there is a good growth of Cardamine pratensis on roadside verges within the boundaries of its known distribution, except towards its western limit in West Sussex where its occurrence appears to be more patchy.

The question now to be asked is "is the beetle present in other south-eastern counties?" In an attempt to seek the answer, Cardamine pratensis should be swept between mid-April and mid-May. Roadside verges appear to be the chief habitat, but shaded marshes where there is a growth of Cardamine amara sometimes yeilds a few specimens, though this habitat is more difficult to sweep satisfactorily. It should not be difficult to decide if C.pervicax is present in a particular district and Coleopterists able to collect in counties adjacent to Kent and Sussex during Spring should make searches for it in order to establish the true range of the species in England.

If any blue Ceuthorhynchus weevils are observed on Cardamine, they should be carefully checked incase they prove to be the much more rare C.pectoralis which has occurred once or twice in company with pervicax in East Sussex.

P.J.Hodge, 8 Harvard Road, Ringmer, East Sussex, BN8 5HJ

TROX HUNTING.

I have been fascinated by the genus Trox F. for a while and never expected to find it locally in Mid-Glamorgan where I live. Joy states that the small Trox scaber (L.) is to be found in owls' nests, and as I do not know where there are any owls' nests, I ruled that species out. However, in April 1982 my 10yr ols son Stephen came home from school with a few beetles he had found in tufts of grass around his school yard, one of which proved to be Trox scaber. Now, my son's school has a lot of very smelly children, and I joked with Stephen that the Trox had mistaken the smell of them for an owls' nest!!

The larger Trox sabulosus (L.) is rare and found in dried carcasses. There are plenty of dead sheep locally in the mountains, but although I have searched many, I have never seem Trox until July 1982. Then whilst visiting traps in an old mine shaft, I turned over an old sheep carcass that I had searched twice previously. There was a ball of muck underneath that moved, looking just like a ball of dung, I assumed it to be a "Pill-beetle" and nearly did not take it. Upon cleaning the beetle at home I discovered it had a very different sculpture and antennae; it was indeed Trox sabulosus, not previously recorded from Glamorgan.

Being very excited by this find, I set a trap to see if there were more about - old bones from the butchers wrapped in wire netting, placed over four jam-jars sunk into the ground near to where the sheep carcass was. Although left for a month and visited weekly, I did not find another Trox.

My sons are hoping for more deep snow this winter so that there will be plenty of dead sheep on the hills next summer. We intend to make a thorough search of the old carcasses in June and July and see if more specimens of this rare beetle can be found.

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#### MORE ON RARE AND DECLINING SPECIES.

Differences of opinion concerning the rarity of many species of British Coleoptera no doubt exist between individual students. Species which are very rare or declining in one corner of the British Isles may be in no immediate danger in another district. Therefore, without any collation of many opinions and records from widely scattered places, accurate patterns are difficult to determine. The results of the various National Recording Schemes should of course show any trends towards changes in distribution, but nevertheless, it may be of interest to record a list of species which are probably decreasing in Britain; it should be born in mind that I live in the extreme south-east of England, and therefore my views may be biased towards the present status of species in that area.

Many rare species amongst our smaller Coleoptera are so imperfectly known both regarding habitat and distribution that I have not attempted to include them here. It might be possible to compile a tentative list of small and obscure species for which there are no recent records, but it would be extremely difficult to decide which species were increasing or endangered. I have deliberately included several species in Group 1 which are still common in many parts of Britain but which I believe may be disappearing from the south-east and so it is hoped that readers of the "Newsletter" living in other districts will be tempted to comment on these species.

Several of the species in Group 111 are perhaps already extinct in Britain but as it is often difficult to make such conclusions, searches for the should be continued with optimism.

Group 1 Species formerly widespread but which now appear to be very local.

Carabus monilis F.  
Pterostichus gracilis (Dj.)  
Stenolophus tentonus (Sch.)  
Brachinus crepitans (L.)  
Silpha obscura L.  
Colobopterus (= Aphodius) subterraneus (L.)  
Onthophagus vacca (L.)  
Cantharis fusca L.  
Malachius aeneus (L.)  
Callidium violaceum (L.)  
Donacia aquatica (L.)  
Phytodecta pallida (L.)  
Phyllotreta cruciferae (Gz.)  
Longitarsus dorsalis (F.)  
Ochrosis ventralis (Ill.)  
Podagrica fuscipes (F.)  
Psylliodes attenuata (Koch)

Group 11 Species formerly very local but now considered rare.

Tachys scutellaris Stph.  
Copris lunaris (L.)  
Coccinella 5-punctata L.  
Acmaeops collaris (L.)  
Donacia sparganii Ahrens  
Cryptocephalus nitidulus F.  
C. sexpunctatus (L.)  
Chrysomela tremula F.  
Mecinus janthinus Germ.

- although a fairly recently discovered species, in Britain does not appear to have been recorded for many years.

Group 111 Very rare species, many perhaps on the verge of extinction (in GB).

<u>Dyschirius extensus</u> Putzeys	<u>Spercheus emarginatus</u> (Sch.)
<u>D. nitidus</u> (Dj.)	<u>Ochthebius aeneus</u> Stph.
<u>Bembidion callosum</u> Kuster	<u>Emus hirtus</u> (L.)
<u>B. octomaculatum</u> (Goeze)	<u>Aphodius quadrimaculatus</u> (L.)
<u>Agonum sahlbergi</u> (Chaud.)	<u>A. lividus</u> (Ol.)
<u>Amara fusca</u> Dj.	<u>A. sordidus</u> (F.)
<u>Harpalus cupreus</u> Dj.	<u>Onthophagus nutans</u> (F.)
<u>H. honestus</u> (Duft.)	<u>O. taurus</u> (Schreber)
<u>Scybalicus oblongiusculus</u> (Dj.)	<u>Cerambyx cerdo</u> L.
<u>Diachromus germanus</u> (L.)	<u>Cryptophagus coryli</u> (L.)
<u>Acupalpus elegans</u> (Dj.)	<u>C. primarius</u> Harold
<u>Fanagaeus cruxmajor</u> (L.)	<u>Dibolia cyanoglossi</u> (Koch)
<u>Chlaenius nitidulus</u> (Sch.)	<u>Rhynchites auratus</u> (Scop.)
<u>C. tristis</u> (Schaller)	<u>R. bacchus</u> (L.)
<u>Callistus lunatus</u> (F.)	<u>Chromoderus affinis</u> (Schrank)
<u>Lebia cruxminor</u> (L.)	<u>Lixus algirus</u> (L.)
<u>L. scapularis</u> (Fourc.)	<u>L. paraplecticus</u> (L.)
<u>Lionychus quadrillum</u> (Duft.)	<u>L. vilis</u> (Rossi)
<u>Drypta dentata</u> (Rossi)	<u>Bagous petro</u> (Hb.)
<u>Haliphus furcatus</u> Seidl.	<u>Baris analis</u> (Ol.)
<u>Rhantus aderratus</u> Gem. & v.H	
<u>Graphoderus bilineatus</u> (Dg.)	

The following comments are based on the results of personal experience and collecting.

Phytodecta pallida is still common in many northern districts and may in fact never have been a common insect in the extreme south-east.

Onthophagus vacca is frequent in parts of south-west England and perhaps east Kent. There are several localities listed in the Sussex VCH, but I have no recent records for the county.

Donacia aquatica has become very rare in southern England though it still breeds in parts of the Scottish Lowlands.

Cantharis fusca is recorded from many localities in the Sussex VCH, but during 10 years in the county I have only taken one specimen of this conspicuous beetle. However, it breeds commonly on the Somerset Levels.

Malachius aeneus used to be widespread throughout England but is seldom, if ever recorded nowadays.

Finally some remarks about the Carabidae in Group iii, why have so many species in this family become so rare? For example Panagaeus cruxmajor which used to occur at times in numbers in a few marshland localities must surely be approaching extinction, yet known breeding sites such as Wicken and Woodwalton Fens remain almost unchanged.

Callistus lunatus was well known up to the early 1950's on the North Downs of Kent and Surrey. It has now declined to the point where it can no longer be found; again plenty of apparently suitable habitat remains.

Lionychus quadrillum a species for which I can offer no explanation as to its decline; plenty of suitable habitat remains today.

Perhaps Coleopterists of past generations adopted techniques which were successful for locating rare insects!

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(While typing the stencils for this and David Atty's articles, my mind needless to say began to draw out names of beetles that I have never turned up, or are indeed apparently not recorded these days. Has Anthaxia nitidula become extinct in Britain - it is quite common in France (I took about fifty in about an hour and a half, including ten or so in one sweep, May 1981). Sphaerus acaroides has not apparently been taken for many years, although minute and possibly easy to overlook, one might say the same about Ptiliids, except the latter are reasonably well known. Aglyptinus agathidioides - two examples only, the Holotype and Paratype - what is a minute beetle that belongs to a predominantly Central American genus doing in a moorhen nest in the English countryside? What about Meloe and Holoparamesus - has anyone found these (apart from M.violaceus and proscarabaeus). We must not forget that although we seem to have lost a number of species, we have gained a fair number too). J.C.

COLEOPTERIST'S MEETING

Dr Mark Shaw, Dept. of Natural History, Royal Scottish Museum, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, is organising a meeting at the University of Glasgow field centre, Rowardenan (Loch Lomond) from June 24th to June 29th. A buffet will be provided for June 24th, and it is possible to book for a varying number of days, not necessarily the whole period.

FINANCES.

The following is a summary of the 1982 accounts

EXPENDITURE		INCOME	
Stamps and envelopes	£40.50p	Subscriptions	£112.20p
Stencils	7.00p		
Duplicating paper	22.96p		
Bank charges	2.15p		
Surplus for the year	<u>39.59p</u>		
	£ 112.20p		<u>£112.20p</u>
Balance at 1st January 1982	£10.67p		
Surplus for the year	£39.59p		
Balance at 1st January 1983	£50.26p		

It is hoped that the subscription can be held as low as possible, and no increase for 1984 is expected. This years outgoings should largely be taken up with postage as the stock of envelopes and headed paper is adequate and should last for another four or so issues. The surplus will either be used to subsidise readers subscriptions if need arises, or can be put to sponsoring/financing a project (any ideas?). Although several subscriptions are still owing, the odd new subscriber is still coming forward.

PLEASE WILL ALL THOSE THAT HAVE NOT PAID, BUT INTEND TO, SEND THEIR CHEQUE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ANYONE NOT SUBSCRIBING BEFORE MAY WILL BE REGARDED AS NO LONGER WISHING TO RECEIVE THE "NEWSLETTER".

(Trox footnote. There is a story in the verbal tradition that the late Philip Harwood or a colleague suggested that the dead animals upon which he found Trox perlatus on the cliffs at Lulworth were so "high" that they must have attracted the beetles from across the Channel).

Aridius bifasciatus (Reitter) on the European mainland - at last!

It has probably surprised most users of "Freude, Harde and Lohse - Die Käfer Mitteleuropas, vol 7" to note that Aridius bifasciatus, such a highly successful colonist of this country, had not been reported from the faunal area covered by that volume at the time of publication - 1967.

In a recent paper, however, (1979, Ent. Blätter, 75:83) Dr.G.Lohse reports (as Lathridius bifasciatus) the first known middle-European capture of the beetle - a single specimen from a bird's nest in Hamburg/Kirchdorf by R.Büche, December 1978. It remains to be seen if this was merely a single casual importation, which seems rather unlikely, or the first indication of an extension of this beetle's Palaearctic distribution.

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David Nash has informed me of a book that he finds very useful, and might be of interest to other Coleopterists. "Mushrooms and other fungi of Great Britain and Europe" Roger Philips, 1981, published by Pan Books (ca £5 or £6). David thinks it is also out in hardback, but adds that the binding on the soft edition is very good and will stand up to wear in the field, laboratory and home. There are over 900 colour photographs and David recommends it without reserve. Also in the series are companion volumes on Flowers; Grasses; Ferns, Mosses and Lichens; and Trees - all are "first rate", the Grasses, Ferns and Mosses volume being very useful too.

HELP - surely you have a note to send in ? No need to type, but write clearly (!). Anything welcome, especially news items etc. not really suitable for the established Entomological press. (Send to J.Cooter, 20 Burdon Drive, Bartestree, Herefordshire, HR1 4DL).