

CRANEFLY RECORDING SCHEME

Newsletter no.1*

This is the first in a newsletter series intended to inform participants of the progress of the scheme and of items of interest.

Operation of the Scheme

Over 50 people have been circulated with details of the scheme, including those known to be actively working on craneflies. It has been encouraging to hear from a number of 'newcomers' to the Diptera, some of whom have been making slow progress for several years, due to the difficulty of making the next step from 'Colyer & Hammond'. One of the objectives of the scheme is to give help and encouragement to those interested in the Diptera, in the hope that assistance with one group of families will give the necessary know-how and confidence for tackling other parts of the order.

Various private and University collections are now being determined. Some very useful mounted and unmounted collections have been sent in, such as one from Foula, one of the Shetland Islands.

An exhibit about the scheme was displayed at the Amateur Entomologists' Society and the British Entomological & Natural History Society annual exhibitions, and also at a Kent Field Club meeting, which produced some useful contacts.

Keys

There have been discussions with the Royal Entomological Society concerning the possibility of reprinting the 1950 Handbook keys. Whilst this is accepted in principle, other priorities leave no prospect of their funding this for several years. Meanwhile it is good to hear that several people have successfully unearthed a copy or made a photocopy. Photocopies can be obtained through the organisers for about £2.

In order to bridge the gap and ensure that an identification guide is available, a series of articles have been started in the Amateur Entomologists Society Bulletin, which will eventually appear as a separate booklet. It is intended to cover at least all the Tipulinae and also provide something which is badly lacking, illustrations of the distinctive parts of the male genitalia. If there are difficulties in following this series, please let the author know (A.E. Stubbs).

* This is NOT a publication. Any original data or records noted

here should not be cited without permission.

Recording cards

The scheme was launched in the Spring, a time of year when thoughts would not be on filling in record cards! We hope those who have not yet sent their records in will manage to find the time during what remains of the Winter. Record cards are available as follows:

- a) Field cards, mainly of use when going through notebooks, etc., where a number of species are recorded from the same locality.
- b) Single species cards, of use where, in going through a collection, one can list all the records on a one card per species basis.
- c) Individual record cards, which are for isolated records, or for making special observations. These are described in the recorders' instruction booklet, which is now available.

The purpose of these cards is to simplify procedures for the recorder. If you wish to send records in another manner, we can transfer them onto standard cards for processing by the Biological Records Centre.

Collecting notes

Some remarkable records, to which we cannot do justice here, have been sent in by Sir Christopher Andrewes. Perhaps the most surprising is six localities in the Salisbury district for Tipula helvola - apparently a very favourable area for this little-known species.

Beginner's luck has got Christopher Little off to a good start - in a small box of crane-flies from near his home in Kent there was a specimen of Tipula livida, and three T. helvola, the latter constituting yet another remarkable record for this species.

The October species Tipula czizeki has been found widely in North Wales and in parts of N.E. England. It is clearly not as rare as the sparse records suggest, but an interesting distribution pattern may be forthcoming, since, despite active searching, it has still not been found in some other parts of Britain.

The species Molophilus lackschewtzi, recently discovered in Ireland, has now been found at three English localities. (The formal addition of this species to the British list will be published shortly in the Proceedings & Transactions of the British Entomological & Natural History Society).

A male Limonia (Dicranomyia) omissinervis de Meijere has been taken in Monmouthshire, which keys to L.(D.)patens in the Handbook. The latter was only known previously from Britain on the basis of one female specimen, which has now been re-examined. As a result, a paper has now been prepared for

publication, to delete patens Lundstroem from the British list, substituting omissinervis in its place.

Look out for a new Limnophila species! The British list contains only two species of the subgenus Limnophila, pictipennis and punctata. Both these species have a deep notch at the tip of tergite 9 (in the male). Theowald (1971 Tijdschr. Ent. 114:234) has just described a new species, arnoudi which virtually lacks the notch. This species could well occur in Britain.

John Carter is interested in the diseases of Tipulidae, in particular virus diseases, which are normally only observable in the larvae. There are two known forms - one results in a blue iridescence of the infected tissues, while the other causes the insect to become white or cream in colour. He would be very pleased to receive Tipulid larvae showing these symptoms, dead (and dried) or alive; they should not be placed in alcohol as this inactivates the virus. In order to identify the host range of the viruses, he is infecting various species of larvae; healthy larvae of the less common species would also be welcome for this purpose. (Address: Department of Bacteriology, West of Scotland Agricultural College, Auchincruive, Ayr.).

Bibliography

A list of papers published in 1972 is attached. It is hoped that over the years we can produce a fairly comprehensive bibliography of European Craneflies. We intend this to be complete from 1972 onwards - that is, to list every new paper of relevance to the British and European fauna. We're bound to miss some - apologies if it's yours, and please let us know.

Recorders' meeting

We would like to meet as many of you as possible, and for you to meet each other. To this end we propose to hold a meeting in London, and suggest Saturday 24th March 1973. This would be held at the Natural History Museum (nearest tube station: South Kensington), where it would be possible for recorders to see the National Collection of Diptera.

The main purpose will be to give instruction on the identification of craneflies, but the programme will also include field techniques, preparation of specimens, literature, operation of the recording scheme, possibly discussion on some of the distribution patterns of craneflies, and anything else anybody wishes to discuss. Whether you are a beginner or are of some experience, we shall be pleased to see you. If required the group can be split for part of the session into elementary and advanced sections. Please let us know as soon as possible if you can attend. If you can't make the 24th March, but could make it on a different day, please let us know also. [see the Questionnaire, as noted below].

Welsh Recording Group

The National Museum of Wales is organising weekend field meetings in order to encourage recording of the flora and fauna in the less frequented parts of Wales. The first two meetings were held last year. A.E.S. attended the second meeting, at Llangollen, and was joined by Mr. Hancock, of Liverpool Museum, who is a member of the Crane-fly Recording Scheme. These meetings are clearly ideal venues for those within reach of Wales. Although the Llangollen meeting was held late in the season (mid October), 50 species of crane-flies were taken in two days, including most of the Autumn Tipula species.

Field meetings

If there is sufficient response, we are proposing to arrange some field meetings. At this stage, these can be most easily organised as day trips around London, since there are a number of people within reasonable range. However, the opportunity may arise to hold ~~field~~ meetings in other parts of the country; the Welsh Recording Group weekends, for instance, provide obvious possibilities. Since these more 'widespread' opportunities may arise at relatively short notice, we need to know where there are recorders who would be interested in ~~field~~ meetings.

We are also prepared to consider running a one week course, possibly at a field studies centre. In this case there may be a greater demand if the course covered all Diptera rather than just crane-flies. Such a course seems the best way of assisting those dipterists who are working in isolation.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire has been produced (copy attached) in order that participants may return the required information with the minimum of effort. The first question, as to whether you are still interested in the scheme, is necessary since a number of enquiries have been received from people with a general interest in recording schemes, but who may now feel that it is not a suitable group. Even if you are only prepared to collect, we still hope that you will take an interest in the scheme. We intend to produce an address list in the next Newsletter, to enable recorders to see whether there are others in their area.

Please return the questionnaires, and send all enquiries to:

A.E. Stubbs, Esq.,
Nature Conservancy,
Foxhold House,
Thornford Road,
Crookham Common,
Newbury, Bucks.

A.E. Stubbs
A.M. Hutson
R.I. Vane-Wright