

CRANEFLY RECORDING SCHEME NEWSLETTER SPRING 2007

Dipterist's Forum Field Meeting in France. 10-17 June 2006

Our host for this visit was Phil Withers who is a resident in the area, and we stayed in an excellent Chambre D'hôte in a village called Sainte Euphémie, about 25km north of Lyon. The weather was very warm and dry and we often spent time in the cool of the evenings sitting on the patio of our flat, before and after a trip to one of the excellent local restaurants. When the patio light came on it attracted a few craneflies, one species of which was *Tipula (Mediotipula) siebkei* Zetterstedt. This is a species which has been found only rarely in the UK. Of course little can be learnt of the ecology of species which are caught at lights, but at least I now know it is there.

One of the attractions was the Fondation Vérots Nature Reserve, located a few kilometres to the east. [N45° 56.616 E04° 55.020] and I spent a few days exploring that site. The whole region, La Dombes, developed an interesting rotation of crops, with fish farming alternating with wheat growing when the lakes were drained. There are three now permanent lakes in the reserve, with well vegetated margins, also dykes, alder carr and woodland; a good mix of biotopes in which Craneflies thrive. Phil Withers has run a Malaise trap in the reserve for a few years now, and it has produced some interesting species. These have included *Tanyptera atrata*, *Nephrotoma cornicina*, *N. flavipalpis*, *Diogma glabrata*, *Gnophomyia viridipennis*, *Limonia nigropunctata*, *Rhipidia uniseriata*, *Helius longirostris*, and *Achyrolimonia neonebulosa* (Alexander) (New to France).

The lake margins yielded such marshland species as *Nigrotipula nigra*, *Helius flavus*, *Euphyllidorea dispar*, *Phyllidorea ferruginea*, *P. longicornis*, *Limnophila pictipennis* and *Erioptera squalida*. This latter was another first for France. There was also the non-British *Dicranomyia tristis*, together with *Illysia maculata* and *Molophilus griseus*, *M. ochraceus*, and a number of other marshland species common in England. The grassland between the lakes and the woodland yielded *Limonia phragmitidis*, *Limonia stigma*, *Nephrotoma appendiculata* and *N. quadrifaria*. The woodland produced *Dictenidia bimaculata*, and *Ctenophora pectinicornis*, as well as the common *Austrolimnophila ochracea*, *Neolimnophila dumetorum*, and *Epiphragma ocellare*. *Limonia macrostigma*, *Rhipidia uniseriata*, and the non-British species *Prionolabis hospes*, (non-British) were among the species recorded from the alder carr.

All together, fifty species have been recorded from the Reserve.

Phil also took us to a number of other interesting sites. One of these was the large old Forêt de la Rena. [N46° 07.654 E05° 13.968] Here *Ctenophora festiva* (non-British) and *Atypophthalmus inustus* occurred, together with a community of craneflies to be found in similar British woodlands.

Another site was a marsh, Les Sagnes, [N45° 15.892 E05° 46.134] situated at 1025m, on the edge of the French Alps and dominated by *Equisetum*. It was a hot day but the delicate 'blue' bodied *Tipula (Yamototipula) caesia* Schummel (non-British) was quite common, along with other marshland species, such as *Eloeophila miliaria* (non-British), *Limnophila schranki*, *Tricyphona immaculata*, *Molophilus propinquus* and *Ptychoptera lacustris*.

On the same day we explored a very large glacial cirque, the Cirque de Saint Môme, [N45° 23.758 E05° 53.469] with a small river which begins as a waterfall, and a beautiful limestone seepage. A species of net-winged midges (Blepharicidae) *Liponeura* sp, was present around the moss-covered boulders in the torrent. Also present were *Pedicia straminea* and *Dicranota subtilis*. Pooting the dripping seepage yielded wet specimens of *Antocha (Orimargula) alpigena* (non-British), and *Elliptera omissa*,

By way of contrast we also visited a carr, the Réserve Naturelle du Marais de Lavour [N45° 49.980 E05° 44.805] which lies in the node between the River Rhône and its smaller tributary the River Seran. Here *Gonomyia bifida* was common, along with *Erioptera (Mesocyphona) fossarum* (Loew) (New to France), *Limonia trivittata* and other marshland species. In the afternoon we explored the bank of the near-by River Seran, and an open marsh. This latter yielded *Nephrotoma guestfallica*, *Tipula pruinosa*, *Illysia maculata*, *Molophilus occultus*, *M. ochraceus* and *M. medius* together with other marshland craneflies. *Dicranomyia modesta* and were common.

It was an excellent field meeting, very much enjoyed by all four participants, and our many thanks are due to Phil Withers for the work that he did to organise our visit and for the help which he gave us

while we were there. The week yielded two species new to France, to add to the single new species from Phil's Malaise trap material. I should also like to thank Dr. Jaroslav Stary for the identification of *Erioptera (Mesocyphona) fossarum* (Loew) and confirmation of *Achyrolimonia neonebulosa* (Alexander).

John Kramer

NOTE BENE !!

Please note the publication of this excellent book, available from Pemberley Books (www.pemberleybooks.com)

Fauna Helvetica 14. Limoniidae & Pediciidae de Suisse. Sigitas Podenas, Willy Geiger, Jean-Paul Haenni & Yves Gonseth . Centre Suisse de cartographie de la faune. Schweizerische Entomologische Gesellschaft. 2006. pp375 Hardback. £35

It will be reviewed in the next edition of the Dipterists Digest.

Why not Adopt a Crane-fly?

There are plenty of rare and little-understood crane-flies which need to be studied in depth and the process of selecting BAP species has recently increased our awareness of this need. The list below, rejected as BAP species, may be useful:

TIPULIDAE

Nephrotoma aculeata, *N. quadristriata*, *N. sullingtonensis*.
Tipula bistilata, *T. gimmerthali*, *T. nodicornis*, *T. yerburyi*

LIMONIIDAE

Arctoconopa melampodia,
Dicranomyia aperta, *D. halterata*, *D. magnicauda*, *D. mellicauda complicata*, *Dicranomyia rufiventris*
Erioptera edwardsi, *E. fascipennis*, *E. flavissima*, *E. mejerei*.
Geranomyia bezzi
Gonomyia hippocampi, *G. alboscutellata*.
Helius hispanicus
Idiocera bradleyi, *I. punctata*, *I. sziladyi*.
Limonia masoni
Molophilus czizeki, *M. pusillus*.
Neolimnophila placida
Orimargo virgo
Ormosia aciculata
Paradelphomyia dalei
Phylidorea heterogyna
Rhabdomastix inclinata
Symplecta chosensis, *S. pusilla*, *S. scotica*.
Tasiocera collini

We have already had some recent good examples eg, Andrew Godfrey's paper on *Lipsothrix*, Peter Boardman's papers in Dipterists Digest on *Phylidorea heterogyna* and *Idioptera linnei*, and in David Heaven's study of *Ellipteroides (Protogonomyia) alboscutellatus*. (Dipterists Digest 2006 Vol.13 No.1)

Derek Whiteley, with access to Derbyshire habitats, is interested in *Limonia masoni*, and Geoff Hancock has recommended *Nephrotoma lunulicornis*, so why not chose a species which occurs in your neighbourhood? Distribution maps on the NBN Gateway might help. (www.searchnbn.com) or the list of RDB species from your County would be another place to start.

Crane-flies in Leicestershire - a Brief Over-view

The Victoria County History of Leicestershire of 1908, lists just nine species of crane-flies in the list of Diptera published there, and this was due to the activity of W.A Vice. One hundred years later we can list 120 species, and so, despite the dearth of resident dipterists, some progress has been made. Leicestershire is a relatively uniform environment as regards the biotopes found there. There are no mountains, or large areas of moorland or bog. There is no coastline, and no limestone valley with

calcareous seepages. With a lower diversity of biotopes there is less species diversity, and even waterfalls are in short supply, and so, therefore, is *Dicranomyia didyma*.

Most of the soils are heavy clays and so there are marshes, wet pasture and some wet woodland. Of course wet pasture grades into marshland, or into lake, pond or canal margins and some marshland species are also found in wet woodland. Flowing water habitats such as rivers, brooks and streams, flow through woodland and pasture and occasionally form flood meadows.

Most of the species that have been recorded in VC 55, are, not surprisingly, to be found in marshland wet woodland. The marshland community consists of about forty species and includes *Ilysia occoecata*, *Molophilus pleuralis*, and *Thaumastoptera calceata*. *Trimicra pilipes* has been recorded by Alan Stubbs in 1991 from the edge of a flood slack, but, since this habitat is vulnerable, it remains to be seen whether it has survived the recent drought summers.

There are about the same number of woodland species to be found, with 58 species being the record. These include *Nephrotoma guestfallica*, *Tipula selene*, *Euphylidorea dispar* and *Rhipidia uniseriata*. Another rarity was *Erioptera veralli* from a stream margin in Launde Park Wood

One of the most interesting areas in the county is the Charnwood Forest area in the north of Leicestershire. This year the Dipterist Forum will be holding a short Autumn field meeting here from 17-21 October. The igneous rock produces a thin acid soil and a few unpolluted streams such as Linford Brook. There on the stream margins can be found *Pedicia littoralis*, *Eloephila verralli* and *Molophilus niger*. *Sphagnum* moss occurs locally in the area and *Prionocera turcica* has been recorded at a few sites here. We have just one record of the much rarer *P. subsericornis*, taken near Groby by Derek Whiteley in August 1989, who also recorded *Nephrotoma croccata* nearby, in June of the same year. Other local Charnwood rarities include *Tipula flavolineata*, *Crypteria limnophiloides*, *Ormosia pseudosimilis*, and *Euphylidorea lineola*.

Tipula staegeri occurs in the Charnwood woodlands in the Autumn, but *Tipula signata* has yet to be recorded.

In this region good quality indicators are as follows:

Old wet pasture - *Tipula pruinosa*; *Erioptera squalida*.

Marshland - *Pedicia rivosa*, *Tipula maxima*.

Woodland - *Dictenidia bimaculata*, *Epiphragma ocellare*.

Wet Woodland - *Rhipidia uniseriata*, *Atypophthalmus inustus*.

Another local European rarity which should be mentioned, with just one record, is *Limonia masoni*, which un-typically turned up in a spring-fed spinney in the north west of the county, to where perhaps, it had been blown. I last recorded it on the Brecklands, which are more typical, and its Leicestershire breeding site has yet to be discovered.

There remains plenty of work to be done within VC55. There are a few other biotopes to explore, and no doubt other species will be added to the list, ... and then there is the larval ecology!

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Cranefly Recording Scheme