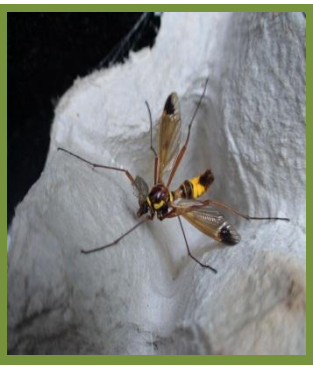
Cranefly News

Dipterists Forum Cranefly Recording Scheme

For Superfamily Tipuloidea& Families Ptychopteridae & Trichoceridae

Newsletter No 23 **Spring 2012**

Editor: John Kramer Layout: John Dobson



Ctenophora ornata (Keith Godfrey)

Field Work 2011(See also Issue 22)

A good year for Ctenophorines

2011 was certainly a good year for the Ctenophorines. Perhaps the unusual weather over the Winter and Spring played a part, or perhaps not (more phenology research is needed; anyone?). Judy Webb recorded four Ctenophorines: *Ctenophora pectinicornis*, *C. flaveolata*, *Tanyptera atrata and T. nigricornis* from a beech wood near Ipsden in the Chilterns in May. Six *C. flaveolata* were seen flying there on the same day. Reports also came in from other recorders. If you also had a record, please make sure that you send it in.

Cranefly news from Shropshire.

The highlight of the Spring from VC40 that didn't make it into my Shropshire update in Cranefly News #22 was the discovery of *Molophilus niger* G in G & T, 1920, new to the county from the Borle Brook near Highley, a few miles north of the Wyre Forest. I visited the site in late April to reccy it for a summer Invertebrate Challenge field day and came across this diminutive dark small fly whilst sweeping over log-jams. The site offers much potential and I plan to go back and look for *Lipsothrix* craneflies there next May. On the field trip in July the highlight was probably *Helius flavus* (Walker, 1856) on a day when craneflies were fairly hard to come by.

Elsewhere Nigel Jones and I did some work for the Shropshire Environmental Data Network (SEDN), our virtual local record centre, and searched for flies around the Meres and Mosses of north Shropshire and upland flushes around the Long Mynd. Craneflies of interest around the Meres and Mosses were *Metalimnobia quadrinotata* (Meigen, 1818) from the Marl Allotments by Fenn's, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses NNR, and *Prionocera turcica* (Fab. 1787) from Clarepool Moss NNR amongst more common species. Again as the summer progressed towards its climax, dry conditions made searching for flies more difficult.

The Long Mynd however was a little more productive with several interesting species recorded including *Molophilus occultus* de Meijere, 1918, *M. flavus* Goetghebuer, 1920 and *Phylidorea squalens* (Zetterstedt [1838]) regularly found at flushes. Elsewhere the only real highlight of the summer was *Diogma glabrata* (Meigen, 1818) from its second Shropshire location at Bury Ditches near Clun.

What started as a really promising year petered out somewhat as the summer season continued.

The 2007 Shropshire cranefly atlas text and maps can be downloaded as a PDF from the resources page at www.invertebrate-challenge.org.uk – it is hoped that an update of new county and uncommon species will be compiled and published on the website during 2012/13.

Pete Boardman
Cranefly recorder for Shropshire VC40

Local Lists

Shropshire

Peter Boardman continues to do very useful work in Shropshire and his list of records for the year also included *Nephrotoma analis*, which is not common, from near the Discovery Centre, at Craven Arms. *Hoplolabis areolata*, a rare fly of sandy river banks, and *Paradelphomyia dalei,* were also very good finds from Downton Gorge NNR. *Ctenophora pectinicornis* had a good year in Shropshire, as in other areas. *Tipula rufina* was also recorded; records for *T. rufina* seem to be falling, perhaps because it emerges late, when many dipterists have ceased collecting for the year. Other species worthy of note, apart from those mentioned by Peter, were *Antocha vitripennis* and *Molophilus curvatus*.

Leicestershire

After some digging in the Archives, I have produced another updated list of the Craneflies of Leicestershire, now standing at 146 species. As with all of these lists, it will form a very useful basis for further work, and perhaps an Atlas for VC 55 is the next step. The list has been published by the Leicestershire and Rutland Entomological Society as an Occasional Publication (LESOP). I have sent out a few pdfs to those who I know might use them. Please let me know if you want one, to compare with your own County Cranefly List. The LES will soon have a website from where all of the publications can be downloaded.

Contents

Pipunculid Parasites of Craneflies

The larvae of most of the species of the family Pipunculidae (Diptera) are parasitoids on various species of bugs (Hemiptera). In 1966 only one species of *Nephrocerus* (Pipunculidae) had been discovered in Britain, and that was *Nephrocerus flavicornis*. In his 1966 RES Key Coe describes the 'considerable speculation' as to its hemipteran host. It was assumed that it was a bug, and since the fly is large, then, they speculated, the bug must also be large. In 1980 Alan Stubbs added *Nephrocerus scutellatus* to the British list, but there were still no clues as to the host.

The relationship was first discovered in 2007 by Koenig & Young who reared infested hosts, not of Hemiptera but of five species of *Tipula* (*Lunatipula*) and *Tipula* (*Yamatotipula*).

Kehlmaier and Floren have recently published an interesting paper about Pipunculidae in the Bialowieza Forest in Poland (1). In that paper they report the occurrence of three larvae of *Nephrocerus flavicornis* (Pipunculidae) in three female adults of *Tipula* (*Beringotipula) unca* (Tipulidae), and also one larva of *N. scutellatus* from a female *T.* (*Lunatipula*) *helvola.*

References

Kehlmaier, C. and Floren A. (2009) Pipunculidae (Diptera) collected by canopy-fogging in the Bialowieza Forest (Poland), including first host records and larval descriptions of two Palaearctic *Nephrocerus* ZETTERSTEDT.
Studia Dipterologica Vol. 16, Heft 1/2.

Koenig, D.P. & Young, C.W. (2007). First observations of parasitic relations between big-headed flies, *Nephrocerus* ZETTERSTEDT and Craneflies, *Tipula* LINNAEUS. Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington 109: 52-65.

Stubbs, A.E., (1980) The largest pipunculid in the land *Nephrocerus scutellatus* (Maquart, 1834) (Diptera, Pipunculidae) new to Britain, with observations of its behaviour in Greece. Proc. Trans. BENHS. 13: 46-48.

John Kramer

Cranefly References

A Message from Pjotr Oosterbroek, Amsterdam

Dear friends and colleagues,

Almost all Alexander's PDFs are now available for easy download from the literature section of the CCW, with thanks to Sigitas Podenas who shared some 90% of them. In total 1042 of Alexander PDF's are available. Missing only are 4 obituaries, the Neotropical catalogue (PDF in preparation by Guilherme Ribeiro) and the Oriental catalogue (PDF in preparation by Herman de Jong's team).

Thanks to Dmitry Gravyushin and Vladimir Lantsov, more than 60 Savchenko PDFs have become available as well, including large ones such as Fauna USSR. You can also search for papers by Oosterbroek (106 papers, 48 with PDF's).

The references in the Citations parts are linked to the reference database. If you click on one of them, the reference is specified, incl. a PDF button if the PDF is available.

Try Tipula helvola; go to the distribution citations for Spain and select Oosterbroek, 2009c. From the page with this reference you can download the PDF immediately.

Have fun.
All the best,
Pjotr Oosterbroek

Illustrated Catalogue of the Craneflies of the World (CCW). Updated 30th November 2011.
Over 15,300 species incl. distributions, citations, illustrations.
PDF's. Online at: http://nlbif.eti.uva.nl/ccw/

This is very good news as many papers, especially those by E. N. Savchenko have good drawings of the male genitalia. It is an excellent resource, so thanks to all involved.

The 2012 Season

We have a good spread of cranefly recorders over the country, so hopefully we will get a good spread of records from everyone at the end of the 2012 season. We can use the records to see if there are changes nationally in the area occupied by a species, and may get some idea of the changes in numbers. Some of you may be part of the Butterfly Conservation teams that do the walked transects to study changes in abundance of your local butterflies. It is a good idea, and if there is a nature reserve near you, you may be able to monitor changes in numbers of craneflies. Some families are good flyers and Malaise traps are useful. My hunch is the craneflies fly much more at night, in the absence of drying sunlight, so any traps which can catch them at night may reveal some new species at a site, as well as give a more accurate idea of numbers flying.

Members of the Northants Group enjoy an Autumn workshop organised by John Showers; examining some of their annual catch of craneflies at Holcote Lodge, the Anglian Water Interpretative Centre, at Pitsford Reservoir.

This is a good way to identify your samples, so if you want to organise something similar for your local group, in your local centre, I can probably organise a time to visit and help. An 'Introduction to Craneflies' course is also available. If you are

organising your programme for 2012, a Cranefly Workshop might be an interesting possibility.

John Kramer

Population Explosion of Autumn Daddy long-legs - *Tipula paludosa*

In March this year I had a mail from Roger Payne, who works at the Southend-on-Sea Museum.

"*A few days ago, (Mar 14th 2011) I received about 50 cranefly larvae which I identified as probably T. paludosa from the groundsman at Belfairs High School in Southend. These had become trapped on hard concrete standing between the school and the playing field. This is not an unusual phenomenon and I have had this enquiry before. Larvae are usually washed out of the soil after rain and become trapped on the hard surface unable to burrow.*

The groundsman informed me that last year (Autumn 2010) they experienced the largest numbers of craneflies that he had seen in 7 years of working at the school. He said the school walls were covered in craneflies and had photographs (see below).

In view of Alan Stubbs article, 'The dog that did not bark' in Dipterists Forum Bulletin, Spring 2011, where he discusses the apparent absence of this species in large numbers last year, I thought you may find this interesting and am enclosing the picture of a large mass of craneflies."

Tipula Records Needed

Are flies in the genus *Tipula* (family Tipulidae, 'daddy long-legs') getting scarcer?

There are 61 species on the current British check-list and, despite the previous item, 29 of these have shown a decline in the number of hectads from where they are recorded, over the past 30 years. It is probable that this has more to do with changes in sampling effort, or a temporary fluctuation, than with a long-term trend in species numbers. If we can increase the recording effort and the numbers still show a decline, it will support the idea that something is happening.

The larvae of all of these species prefer moist conditions. Some live beneath mosses, while others live in peaty or marshy ground. Reasons for a possible decline may be linked with this.

Some species, such as *Tipula unca*, *T. pagana*, and *T. scripta*, are ones that you will find locally. Others are species of woodland (*T. signata*, *T. staegeri*), upland (*T. montana, T. subnodicornis*) or moorland species. Please have a look in your 'Provisional Atlas of the long-palped craneflies' by Alan Stubbs and explore. If you are going to the mountains, collect along the borders of streams and in any sheltered area. If you know someone who is using a light to record nocturnal moths, see if you can beg the by-catch of craneflies.

As usual, let me know if you need any help; an Atlas, or the complete list of declining craneflies, although all records are useful. Specimens can be sent to me for identification.

John Kramer

NB. The next copy deadline for Cranefly News will be July 15th. Why not focus on your local nature reserve and send in a report?

All correspondence through john.kramer@btinternet.com please.