

CRANEFLY RECORDING SCHEME

Newsletter No. 2*

April, 1973

This newsletter is mainly to report the results of the meeting held in March and also to get some quick answers to points raised by this meeting. The easiest way to get these answers is by a questionnaire. Questionnaire 2 is therefore enclosed and we apologise for this so soon after the last one, but it does help get uniform answers to the questions we need to ask.

The second part of the 1972 bibliography and a check list of British Crane-flies has been prepared and will be distributed soon.

An address list of people working on the scheme is attached.

Meeting held on 24th March. Twenty-eight people attended the meeting at the British Museum, coming from as far afield as Liverpool, Warwickshire, Peterborough and Southampton.

In the morning slide illustrated talks were given on habitats for craneflies, aspects of distribution studies and cranefly taxonomy. After lunch, at the Victoria and Albert Museum cafeteria or a pub, the group re-assembled in the Diptera Section. Demonstrations were provided of the main British and European literature, genitalia preparation, practice use of keys with the aid of microscopes, live larvae and the techniques used in obtaining them and the use of field equipment in collecting adults. The British collection of diptera was freely available for reference.

A discussion was held on the future and function of such meetings and it was proposed that another questionnaire should be issued. There was support for further meetings, including some on diptera in general, and the suggestion that a 'society' be formed. In the view of the organisers the latter proposal is premature, but informal evolution in that direction may occur. It was agreed that Herefordshire would provide a good field meeting centre. Discussions on the cost of photocopying keys revealed that someone can do this at about 2p/sheet. The meeting supported the aim of producing a provisional atlas of distribution maps for the Tipulinae.

First Questionnaire. The main features of the returns were that 10 people lacked a key, 20 people are interested in larvae, 20 people were interested in a weeks field course in diptera and most people would like a days field trip within easy range of their home. An address list has been prepared largely on the basis of the returns.

Second Questionnaire. The organisers would welcome your views on the meeting held on 24th March 1973 at the British Museum. The meeting was designed to meet the needs of those from a wide background and level of experience. It would therefore be of great assistance to know what you found useful, whether

* This is NOT a publication. Any original data or records noted here should not be cited without permission.

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the presentation was of too high or too low a level and how any future meetings could best be arranged to meet your own particular needs. For this purpose a Yes/No layout is too inflexible, so please comment against the various sub heads - we do not mind what you say as things cannot be improved if you keep quiet. If you did not attend this meeting, but might attend a future one, we should be glad of your views.

The other matters on the questionnaire concern your wider interests in diptera and the future facilities which you would like to see developed. The field meeting is described below.

Field Meeting in the Forest of Dean. The main factors for the weeks field course were that many people put a limit of about 150 miles on travelling distance but during the summer vacation the eastern half of Britain, where most people live, can be a bit sparse in Diptera. It was therefore necessary to find a location within reasonable distance in the west country, and of the few Centres able to provide microscopes, and at as modest a price as possible, the choice was limited at this short notice.

A provisional booking has been made at the Wilderness Field Studies Centre at Mitcheldean in Gloucestershire. The Centre is run by Gloucestershire County Council and is able to provide low power binocular microscopes and a complete set of the published Royal Entomological Society keys on diptera.

The Forest of Dean is one of the major forest areas in Britain and contains a wide range of habitats, including the classic Wye Valley. The area is poorly known for diptera, and the adjacent counties of Herefordshire and Monmouth are similarly under recorded; higher ground in Wales is within reach. The Forest has yielded some good hauls of diptera to one of the organisers; Monmouth was the source of Dicranomyia omissinervis (see Newsletter No. 1) and Hereford yielded some outstanding species to J.H. Wood at the turn of the century.

This course, though organised under the Crane-fly Recording Scheme, will provide supervision for the study of all groups of diptera and will assist with field work techniques and practical identification using keys. The organisers will arrange the supply of a wide range of keys.

The dates are 18th - 24th August, with possible extension to 26th. The charge is £1.50 per day full board with a surcharge of 25p for stay on a Saturday or Sunday. One has to bring a pair of sheets and a pillowcase or pay a hire charge of 40p. It is hoped that those taking cars will be able to offer lifts to some of those without transport.

The organisers would be glad to hear as soon as possible from those wishing to attend in order that the booking may be confirmed. A £1 deposit should be enclosed. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to Alan Stubbs.

Day Field Trips. It is hoped to arrange a few day meetings in the field, but at any distance from London these will have to be arranged at short notice.

Distribution maps of Tipulinae. Following the meeting, the Biological Records Centre has agreed in principle to the proposal to produce a provisional atlas of the Tipulinae. It is felt by the organisers that an early goal would provide an incentive and a feeling that tangible results were being achieved.

This sub-family includes roughly one third of the British Tipulidae and is mainly composed of large species, which are the ones readily worked on by newcomers to the group. The major collections and main literature sources will yield a considerable amount of data but a boost is needed to the available field data. It is proposed to allow two field seasons work and to assemble the data for map production in the winter of 1974/75. It is now up to participants to assist meeting this time table - it is specimens which are required, the organisers can cope with identifications, so any crane-fly with a wing length over about 12 mm. stands a good chance of being eligible.

Please return the questionnaires, and send all enquiries to:

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A.E. Stubbs

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