

ORTHOPTERA MAPPING SCHEME

Newsletter No. 5 (Summer 1979)

The Provisional Atlas of the Insects of the British Isles Part 6 Orthoptera has been revised to include all records received to 30th June 1979. The revised atlas will be published later in 1979 and will be available to recorders at a reduced rate. Very substantial progress has been made since the last Atlas was compiled with records up to May 1977. The efforts of 106 active Recorders, whose work has justified the present revision, are much appreciated. It is now possible to see clearly where some "strategic" gaps in our survey remain. These are detailed below so that those of us in a position to do so can make a special effort to close at least some of them by the coming autumn or during next (1980) summer.

A list of "strategic" gaps to be closed

(a) Regional gaps (South to North)

1. WEST CORNWALL (VC1) and NORTH DEVON (4). Gaps in the map^{*} for the Dark Bush-cricket, Pholidoptera griseoptera Deg. should be taken as a general guide, since this species may be anticipated to occur in all 10 km squares with land below 200 metres in these two vice-counties.
2. BERKSHIRE and the northern edge of HAMPSHIRE (100 km square 41). Although well encompassed by a number of very active recorders, the northern half of the 100 km square 41 remains very poorly covered. A great part of the area is under intensive arable farming but it still contains unploughed chalk downland, deciduous woodland and undrained marshland and river valleys where good records may be expected.
3. SOUTH MIDLANDS. Even poorer is the current coverage of the northern two-thirds of the 100 km square 42 and southern third of the square 43; an area comprising the counties of Warwickshire (38), Oxfordshire (23), Northamptonshire (32) and Leicestershire (55), all of which still have good woodland or limestone/chalk terrain as well as scattered heathland worth exploring.
4. THE MORECAMBE BAY COAST (100 km square 34). This is perhaps potentially the most interesting area, as yet virtually unexplored for Orthoptera in the post-1960 era. Walney Island particularly ought to be surveyed as soon as possible.
5. THE GLASGOW AREA. Although the species total is not likely to be high, much of the 100 km square 26 and the southern quarter of 27 are in urgent need of attention if only to link the moderately well covered Southern Uplands with the now partially covered Highland Zone.
6. NORTH EAST SCOTLAND. In 100 km square 38 there are virtually no records from North Aberdeenshire (93) or Banffshire (.94).
7. CAITHNESS AND ORKNEY. Likewise vice-counties (109 and (11) are practically unsurveyed, and a scatter of records is needed soon, to link up with recent records from the adjacent zone of the North-West Highlands.
8. IRELAND. Up-to-date records would be particularly welcome from Clare (H9) especially along the Shannon estuary, and East Cork (H5) and Waterford (H6).

* Provisional Atlas published 1978

(b) Species gaps (South to North)

M. thalassinum: Not recorded from but potentially present in Regional Gaps 1, 2, 3 and just possibly 4 and also from South Essex (18).

T. viridissima: From North Devon (4).

D. verrucivorus: From the Ventnor area of the Isle of Wight (40/57) and the Burley district of the New Forest (41/20), single specimens were found in both places, in 1951 and 1897. Folkestone Warren is also a possibility (61/23).

P. griseoptera: Its distribution in vice-counties West Cornwall (1), East Cornwall (2), North Devon (4), North Hampshire (12), Berkshire (22), Oxfordshire (23), Bucks (24) and South Essex (18), particularly need investigating. In this late season it should continue to stridulate up to the end of October at least.

P. denticulata (now correctly P. albopunctata f falcata): There are no post 1960 records for the south coast of Cornwall between the eastern side of the Lizard (10/70) eastwards to the Tamar estuary (20/45); nor from the South Devon coast between Salcombe (20/73) and Sidmouth (30/18). There are pre 1960 records from almost every 10 km square between these points. It is unlikely to have vanished completely from such long stretches of visually suitable coastlines in the last twenty years.

M. brachyptera: Its distribution in West Cornwall (1) and North Devon (4) need investigation. It is easily missed unless very numerous.

M. roeselii: Extensive areas of rough grassland in the vicinity of estuaries of all major rivers (including the Shannon) from the Solway southwards would be worth a search, now that it has been recorded from several localities remote from each other.

C. dorsalis: So far not recorded from West Cornwall (1) or North Devon (4) where there is much suitable-looking habitat for it. Morecambe Bay is also a possible area.

L. punctatissima: As for P. griseoptera and M. thalassinum. Vicinity of Morecambe Bay is also possible.

N. sylvestris: Has been reported from East Cornwall (4) by a reliable but now deceased recorder. Any recent records from Devon and Cornwall most welcome.

G. gryllotalpa: Records from anywhere in the country please!

T. ceperoi: There are no records from the coast of S. Devon (3) yet there appear to be many suitable sites for the species. Folkestone Warren (61/23) also a likely locality.

S. stigmaticus: Please check most carefully any conspicuously small but fully winged grasshoppers. These could be as yet overlooked colonies almost anywhere in Britain.

O. rufipes: Up-to-date records for the north of Devon, S. Gloucs. (34) and the Forest of Dean district, 32/60 and 61 would be most valuable.

M. maculatus: Any records for any of the Channel Isles would be useful. There are none at present.

C. albomarginatus: Records needed from the vicinity of Morecambe Bay and the Channel Isles. There are no recent records for S. Devon (3).

County Surveys: Tetrad (2 x 2 km square) surveys of Orthoptera and Dictyoptera of Dorset (9) and Hampshire (11 and 12) excluding the Isle of Wight by A J Brown and of Surrey (17) by D W Baldock have been completed and are in the process of being submitted for publication probably in the Entomologists' Gazette. A tetrad survey of Bedfordshire (30) by D G Rands has been completed and the results published in The Bedfordshire Naturalist No. 32 (Oct. 1978). He is at present working on a tetrad survey of the Isle of Wight; while R S Cropper is currently carrying out a tetrad survey of Somerset Orthoptera. Several other recorders are now undertaking comprehensive Orthoptera surveys, as are a number of County Record Centres. I propose to devote a future newsletter to the subject of detailed local surveys of Orthoptera, so will any reader who has information covering county or district surveys please let me have any details. This subject was initially raised in Newsletter No. 2.

Other Orders: Please send me any 10 km records of native species of Dermaptera (Earwigs) and Dictyoptera (Cockroaches) as it is hoped that a series of preliminary maps may be produced. The last maps of native Ectobius species appeared in 1974. No earwig maps have yet been produced, in the 10 km national series. I would also welcome your views on the possibility of setting up a survey of native Thysanura (Three-pronged Bristle-tails).

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