

NEURO NEWS



The Newsletter of the British Isles Neuroptera Recording Scheme

Number 21

Winter 1997/1998

WELCOME

Another year is almost at an end and I am pleased to report that completed recording cards are again starting to flow in my direction. The available evidence seems to suggest that 1997 was not a good year for lacewings generally in Britain; I wonder if continental readers had the same experience. In fact, judging from the empty spaces on the display tables at the annual exhibition of the British Entomological & Natural History Society a few weeks ago it was a pretty poor year for most insect groups. Numbers of Neuroptera were lower than usual in most areas of the country and the number of reported species is down on earlier years. I am anxious to get a wider picture than is possible by talking to just a few contacts so please do send in completed record cards for the year (and any outstanding for earlier years) as soon as possible. Cards are still available free of charge from the Monks Wood Biological Records Centre (address on last page). Don't forget also that I am always pleased to receive material for identification or confirmation as long as it has data attached. My thanks to the following stalwarts who have already sent me either completed record cards or material for identification/confirmation since the last newsletter appeared: Paul Cobb; Arthur Ewing; Chris Haes; Bob Heckford; Mike Hull; Alan Lazenby; Hugh Loxdale; Godfrey Smith; Ray Softly and Adrian Spalding.

NEW BRITISH LACEWING KEY IS PUBLISHED ... AT LAST

At long last the new lacewing key is published and available. It is normal practice for such keys in the AIDGAP series to appear first as a paper in the journal *Field Studies* (in this case, volume 9, pages 179-269), and then to be followed by reproduction between covers for sale. By the time you read this newsletter the booklet version will be available for purchase. Much of the earlier (blue-covered) test version has been altered, including a complete re-write of the key to Raphidioptera and the addition of *Chrysoperla lucasina* to the Chrysopidae key. Please don't use this any more - throw it away and use the new one instead.

The new key is available from the Field Studies Council, Preston Montford, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY4 1HW, UK. The price is £6.50.

NEW RECORDING CARD

Several people have commented that the present RA68 lacewing recording card is in need of revision. The name *Chrysopa* is incorrectly used for all the green lacewings, but more important is the fact that several new species are missing. During November I returned final proofs of a new card to Monks Wood for reproduction and this will be printed shortly. Since there are only about 50 of the old cards left at Monks Wood (which says something about how active we have all been in recording lacewings!), the new card should be available more or less immediately. Order your **free** stock of the new RA68 lacewing cards direct from Henry Arnold, Biological Records Centre, ITE Monks Wood, PE17 2LS. Please note that I do not keep a stock so writing to me is of no use.

HELLO ...

We welcome Dr. Michael Ohl, Museum für Naturkunde, Institut für Spezielle Zoologie, Invalidenstr. 43, D-10115 Berlin, Germany to our circle of readers.

... AND GOODBYE

Our best wishes go to Brian Eversham who has left the Monks Wood Biological Records Centre for a new position with one of the county wildlife trusts. Brian has been a pillar of support for the lacewing recording scheme since its beginning and has provided me with a very great deal of help over the years, particularly with production of recording cards and, of course, with the *Provisional Atlas*. It has also been Brian that produced the newsletter for us twice each year from my typed copy. Hopefully he can now find time to sit back and read the newsletter instead of distributing it. As far as the Lacewing Recording Scheme is concerned, Brian's duties have been taken on board by another well-known and long-serving member of the staff at Monks Wood - Dr Henry Arnold.

LACEWINGS AND LIGHT TRAPS

A recent appeal to lepidopterists in the journal *Entomologist's Record* has started to bear fruit. So far I have received papered or pinned lacewings from six light trap operators in areas of Britain from which I had no records to date. These included a new Scottish locality for *Drepanepteryx phalaenoides*, amongst others. Light traps are a very efficient way of recording many species of lacewing and it is usually not hard to find somebody locally who is using one for moths. If every reader made contact with one light trap operator this winter and persuaded him/her to collect all of the lacewings that come to the trap in 1998 we could gain a great deal of useful information. In order to encourage people to do this I am offering to examine all the light trap material during 1998 and to provide the trap operator with a site list of species for the year. Ideally specimens will be gathered on a nightly basis, but failing that one week samples are OK (monthly samples give us far less data but are better than nothing - so if this is all your local lepidopterist is prepared to do then still say "yes"). Specimens need not be pinned but are fine in paper triangles (though you should avoid storing these in plastic bags or airtight containers until they are properly dry or else mould is likely to form). Send all material to my address on the last page of this newsletter. And yes ... I do want to see all those *Chrysoperla carnea* specimens in April - we need to work out percentages of *C. lucasina* and *C. carnea* sensu stricto, not to mention distribution.

UPDATING THE LACEWING DISTRIBUTION MAPS

The published British Isles distribution maps of Neuroptera, Megaloptera, Raphidioptera and Mecoptera are now three years old so it is perhaps time we took a fresh look at some of these. The maps were produced from the computer at Monks Wood Biological Records Centre but I also have the data duplicated on my own computer as a DMap file. Over the course of this winter I am hoping to add the data from record cards received since the Atlas was published and then generate new maps for selected species in the summer 1998 newsletter. This is a bit of a long task, since record cards are arranged by site and DMap files are arranged by species. I need to manually type in the grid reference for each species from the cards and this will take some time. I am thinking of doing the Chrysopidae first - including *Chrysoperla lucasina* and *Chrysoperla carnea*, but if there are other groups for which updated maps would be more useful please let me know.

NEW CURATOR IN BERLIN

Michael Ohl is now the new curator for Neuropteroidea (and Orthopteroidea and some other small insect orders) at the Museum für Naturkunde at Berlin in succession to K.K. Günther. Anybody interested in borrowing material is welcome to contact him -- Dr. Michael Ohl, Museum für Naturkunde, Institut für Spezielle Zoologie, Invalidenstr. 43, D-10115 Berlin, Germany. Tel.: ++49-30-2093-8507; Fax.: ++49-30-2093-8528; e-mail: michael.ohl@rz.hu-berlin.de

PUBLICATIONS BROUGHT TO MY NOTICE

As usual, this section of the newsletter depends on authors sending reprints or photocopies of their papers to me for inclusion. Recently published papers will, if sent to me, automatically be included; older papers may be included if space permits or if they are particularly relevant. I will include papers from all countries in all languages if they are relevant to the study of Neuroptera, Raphidioptera, Megaloptera or Mecoptera. **Would contributors please note that I try to publish journal titles IN FULL.** If only the "World List" abbreviation is printed on your reprints please write out the title in full in a covering note to avoid any confusion caused by my lack of linguistic skill.

Unless stated to the contrary, papers listed are written in English. In cases where the title is not, I have attempted a translation. If an English summary is given in a non-English language paper this fact is stated. Where it is not, I usually attempt a brief translation of the summary given.

- Canard, M., 1997 Can lacewings feed on pests in winter? (Neur.: Chrysopidae and Hemerobiidae). *Entomophaga* **42**: 113 - 117.

Some lacewings overwinter as larvae and may be efficient predators. They can be used to help controlling aphids in winter.

- Devetak, D., 1996 Ogrojnost mrejekrilcež (Neuropteroidea): Threat status of Neuropteroidea. in Gregori, J., Martinčič, A., Tarman, K., Urbanc-Berčič, O. & Zupančič, M. (eds.) *Nature in Slovenia: State and prospects*. Association of Slovene Ecologists, Ljubljana, pp. 290 - 296.

The paper deals with the role of Neuropteroidea in ecosystems. Fifteen species are either endangered, vulnerable or rare in Slovenija. This is essentially Slovenija's Red Data List of lacewings. Seven species are mapped for the country. In Slovenian.

- Devetak, D., 1996 *Palpares libelluloides* (Linnaeus, 1764) in the northwestern part of the Balkan Peninsula (Neuroptera: Myrmeleontidae). *Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies* **9/96**: 211 - 216.

The northwestern Balkan Peninsula as here defined runs from Albania to Istria in the former Jugoslavija. The distribution of this ant lion here is reported and information on feeding and habitat is presented. In English.

- Devetak, D.
& Amon, T., 1997 Substrate vibration sensitivity in the leg scolopidial organs in the green lacewing, *Chrysoperla carnea*. *Journal of Insect Physiology* **43**: 433 - 437.

The threshold sensitivity of the leg-vibration receptors of *C. carnea* was investigated electro-physically. In English.

- Hancock, E. G. &
Whittington, A.E.
1997 A review of the status of *Drepanopteryx phalaenoides* (Linn.) in Scotland (Neuroptera; Hemerobiidae). *Glasgow Naturalist* **23**: 23 - 24.

Summarises all known Scottish records and provides a useful overview of this elusive insect in Scotland

- Ohm, P.
& Hölzel, H. 1997 Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Neuropterenfauna der Maskarenen (Neuroptera:

Coniopterygidae, Hemerobiidae, Chrysopidae, Myrmeleontidae). *Entomofauna* **18**: 221-236.

All known records of twenty species of lacewings known from the Mascarene Islands east of Madagascar are listed. The fauna of the islands is composed of widely distributed (10), Madagascan (4) and restricted to the Mascarenes (6) species. The faunas of La Réunion and Mauritius are remarkably similar. In German with English summary.

Wachmann E.

& Saure, C. 1997 Netzflügler, Schlamm- und Kamelhalsfliegen: Beobachtung, Lebensweise. Weltbild

Verlag GmbH. Reviewed below.

BOOK REVIEW

Netzflügler, Schlamm- und Kamelhalsfliegen: Beobachtung, Lebensweise by **Ekkehard Wachmann and Christoph Saure**. 160 pages, numerous colour plates. 187 x 115 mm, hardbound. ISBN 3 89440 222 9. Weltbild Verlag GmbH, Steinerne Furt 68 - 72, 86167 Augsburg, Germany, 1997. 36DM plus postage.

For those, like the reviewer, whose sole language is English, this is a book entitled "Lacewings, alder- and snake-flies: observations, life-histories".

This new book is perhaps something akin to our own *Observers Books*. A lengthy and comprehensive introduction to the three groups of insect is followed by keys to identify specimens to family for both adults and larvae. The remainder of the book comprises a short but comprehensive text on a number of representative species. If one reads German then this book will be invaluable. Its main value, however, lies in the large number of excellent colour photographs of both adults and larvae. These are some of the finest that I have seen and, though pictures are no substitute for keys, they are likely to be of considerable help at least to those lacking experience in the groups covered.

Two small errors have been kindly notified to me by Christoph Saure: on page 57 drawing Z-16 has been reduced too much whilst the accompanying captions have not, with the result that the caption arrows point to the wrong features and on pages 84 and 88 the pictures of *Hemerobius atrifrons* and *Wesmaelius concinnus* have been accidentally transposed. Apart from these two, the book seems remarkably error-free; it would make an excellent Christmas stocking-filler for anyone with an interest in the Neuroptera, Megaloptera and Raphidioptera.

Colin W. Plant

EDITORIAL ADDRESSES:

Neuro News is published by the BRITISH ISLES NEUROPTERA RECORDING SCHEME from the Biological Records Centre, ITE Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, PE17 2LS, England and is

EDITED BY Colin W. Plant at 14 West Road, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 3QP, England, to whom all contributions and requests concerning the scheme should be sent. **Specimens for identification of verification** are positively welcomed at the editorial address provided that they are accompanied by full data. Please, always state whether or not return of the specimen(s) is required otherwise they will be retained in my collection. For larger packages, please enclose return postage stamps. Telephone/Facsimile callers on 01279-507697 (UK) or 00-44-1279-507697 (from overseas). E-mail Colinwplant@compuserve.com (the former, numeric, e-mail address at 101621.1651@compuserve.com still works too).

Neuro News may now also be read by those interested and with access to a computer on the internet at address <http://entowww.tamu.edu/research/neuroptera/neuroweb.html>