

THE FERAL LARVA OF THE ROSY WAVE,
SCOPULA EMUTARIA HUBN. (LEP.:
GEOMETRIDAE)

By J. PLATTS*

Whilst searching plants of *Chenopodium* spp. for larvae of the plain pug (*Eupithecia simpliciata* Haw.) on October 7th 1984 along the flood protection bank north of Faversham, Kent, I chanced to brush a clump of sea beet (*Beta maritima*) into my beating tray. No *simpliciata* appeared, but two very obvious "wave" larvae were found, each about half an inch in length. Both larvae were given knot-grass on which they fed into late autumn, when one unfortunately disappeared. The remaining larva successfully overwintered and completed its growth on dandelion. On July 30th a male *emutaria* emerged.

Revisiting the area on September 8th 1985 I obtained another *emutaria* larva from the same spot. Although a month earlier than the previous year, this larva was considerably larger, being about three-quarters of an inch in length. Another was shaken out of sea beet on October 12th. Despite intensive searching elsewhere on this date no further larvae were found although at least a dozen other clumps were shaken carefully. Adjacent patches of sea wormwood and goosefoot yielded nothing; however these plants were close to the edge of the creek with distinct possibilities of regular flooding during winter.

Allan (*Larval foodplants*) gives a variety of foodplants for this species on the continent, including *Atriplex* — a closely allied genus to *Chenopodium* and *Beta*. The only other food sources in the immediate vicinity of the *maritima* were various grasses and an occasional *Rumex* species, quite devoid of any foliage. It was noticeable that all the clumps of sea beet were near the top of the flood bank and thus would probably avoid the highest tides. It seems evident larvae could overwinter amongst these clumps, the robust stature of the plant affording shelter in this exposed area of salt-marsh.

Both of the larvae collected in 1985 were deprived of knotgrass and left with a few sprigs of sea beet containing ripening fruits and ovary. A very small amount of dark orange frass was passed but it appeared that the larvae were not prepared to feed up as they sometimes do when reared from the egg, and consequently were kept at more or less outdoor temperatures, where feeding virtually ceased. Despite the cooler evenings some activity was noticed after dark — the larvae moving slowly round the food container. However during the day the larvae were to be found sitting on the stems of

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the sea beet, occasionally one on top of the other! Although a leaf of beet was provided, I found no evidence it had been utilised and assumed the larvae were nibbling the fruiting heads or decaying debris, thus accounting for the small amount of frass passed.

THE SMALL LAPPET (*PHYLLODESMA ILICIFOLIA* (LINN)) STILL RESIDENT IN BRITAIN — Amongst the general observations on butterflies made by a friend in a telephone conversation during the latter part of July 1985, mention was made to small (c. 1.5 inch long) larvae similar to those of the oak eggar that he had come across feeding on bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) a few days previous on a visit to a locality in the South West of England. As I was to be away from home for the next few weeks and being naturally intrigued by their identity a request was made for him to collect some. This was done, 17 larvae being collected on the 3rd August 1985 and from which I eventually received on the 15th October 14 cocoons spun up in tissue paper. Unfortunately 3 larvae had died having fallen foul to a rather inquisitive cat! However, the remainder fed on *Vaccinium* provided and had all spun up during late August/September. With by now a strong suspicion as to their identity, upon receipt I decided to force a few to confirm my thoughts. Two cocoons were subsequently forced, the remainder being kept outside for a normal emergence. One cocoon produced a fine female *ilicifolia* on the 2nd November. The other upon dissection, on the 13th November revealed a dead shrivelled larva. In addition to the locality from which the larvae were collected, similar larvae were also noted at a similar locality a couple of miles distant from the first. I myself have visited both sites previous to the knowledge of this species's presence but only during June/July. However, the habitat found there is, although limited in extent quite widespread in that general area. A full report for *The Entomologist's Record* will be produced after the 1986 season once a better impression of its abundance and distribution in this entomologically underrecorded area has, hopefully been achieved. — N. W. LEAR, 178 St. John's Lane, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 5AR.

LEUCODONTA BICOLORIA D. & S. IN THE CHANNEL ISLANDS. — In relation to R. F. Haynes's paper on *L. bicoloria* (*Ent. Rec. J. Var.* 1984, 96: 1-6) I would like to record the presence of a female specimen of this moth in the Coney Collection of the City of Bristol Museum & Art Gallery labelled "Jersey vii.05". Although not classed as part of the British Isles it seems sufficiently close to our shores to warrant note. This species is not mentioned in T. N. D. Peet's list for Guernsey (1984). — N. W. LEAR, 178, St. John's Lane, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 5AR.



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