

“... this highly polyphagous species has recently become a pest of vines and orchard trees in continental Europe...”, although the primary literature source quoted is dated 1966. This record is therefore of interest in respect of the foodplant, locality and mode of larval feeding.

My thanks are due to Mr. K. Tuck of the British Museum (Natural History) for confirming the identification, and especially to my colleague, Bob Barker, for generously donating the entire bunch of grapes, and for collecting further examples from his garden. PAUL SOKOLOFF, 4 Steep Close, Orpington, Kent.

A SPIDER-EATING DRAGONFLY — Dragonflies are obvious and voracious predators; with keen eyesight, powerful jaws and strong flight, they are able hunters. Although I have often watched them chasing insects on the wing, I have never seen or heard tell of the remarkable behaviour I recently observed.

During early May, while on holiday on the Greek Island of Samos, just off the coast of Turkey, I found a blue and black *Aeshna*-like species patrolling a terraced olive grove at about 600 feet. The olive trees were quite old and widely planted, with cypress trees interspersed; the low herbage was lush and insect life abounded. I watched the dragonfly for a few minutes as it darted nimbly about taking flies and beetles out of the air. It carefully followed a particular ‘beat’ around several of the olive and cypress trees, and made the flight about them several times as I watched. But, on one pass beside two closely adjacent cypresses, it veered aside and came to hover about 6 inches in front of a small (4mm) spider sitting in the middle of the orb web it had strung between the two trees. The *Aeshna* then hovered up over the web, and came down on the far side turning through 180 degrees as it did so, again hovering about 6 inches in front of the spider. Then with a sudden movement, it darted forward and snatched the spider off of the web with its jaws before hovering back up and over the undamaged and now empty web. It ate the spider immediately and quickly resumed its manoeuvres up and down the grove. After a further few minutes, as I moved closer to watch, it startled and flew off, not to return.

I had no chance to see anything else like this while I was on the island, as this was the only dragonfly I saw and also the only orb web spider.

Hobby (The prey of British dragonflies, *Trans. Ent. Soc. South Eng.*, 8, Part 2, 1932, pp.65-76) did not record any spider species as prey although he does state ‘exotic species have sometimes been taken with spiders and other wingless arthropods as prey, but there is no information available as to the methods by which these were captured’. Obviously plucking the spider out of its web is one method!

Whatever the palatability of spiders to dragonflies, or the frequency of their encounters, the precise and seemingly calculated movements of this specimen certainly indicate that there is still a lot to be discovered about the hunting and feeding behaviour of dragonflies and other insects. RICHARD A. JONES, Garden Flat, 131 Chadwick Road, Peckham, London SE15 4PY.

XANTHORHOE BIRIVIATA BORKH (LEP.: GEOMETRIDAE) IN KENT — On the night of 30th July 1986 a female *biriviata* came to my garden light trap. This would appear to be the first record of this species in Kent. About 60 ova were obtained before the moth died 3 days later. A brief search in the wood behind my house yielded a few plants of *Impatiens parviflora*, so it seems probable that there is a breeding colony in the vicinity. DENNIS O'KEEFE, 50 Hazelmere Road, Petts Wood, Orpington, Kent.

A FURTHER BRITISH RECORD OF OPSIPHANES TAMARINDI FELDER & FELDER (LEP.: NYMPHALIDAE, BRASSOLINAE). — Further to the records listed by Bristow (1986, *Ent. Rec.* 98: 96-97). I can report a further British specimen of this species. On 2nd February, 1984, an adult male was discovered in a green-grocer's shop in Leicester in a box of bananas originating from Colombia. The specimen is now in the collections at New Walk Museum, Leicester, where it was identified by Miss A. D. Lomas. — D. A. LOTT, Leicestershire Museums Service, 96 New Walk, Leicester.

EGG BATCH SIZE IN THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY — Further to the observation by Adrian Riley (*Ent. Rec.* 97:190) on the size of *lucina* egg batches when he found twelve eggs on one leaf of cowslip (*Primula veris*), I feel this may have been due to inclement weather, especially high winds, when a female is confined to a single leaf rather than being free to randomly distribute her eggs on available plants.

This could explain why, on 8.vi.1986, in a Buckinghamshire locality, my seven year old daughter found a batch of 16 eggs on one leaf, after my wife had found one batch of 5 and another of 3 on the same cowslip plant. I may add that I found two batches of 2 eggs after a long search! This locality has also produced two examples of ab. *leucodes* Lamb. D. STOKES, 97 St. James Park Road, Northampton, NN5 5EU.

SITOCHROA PALEALIS D. & S. (LEP.: PYRALIDAE) IN MID-KENT — On 1st August 1985 a single fresh specimen of this species came to m.v. light at East Malling. This is the first record of *palealis* for this site, and was followed by a second on 21st August 1985.



Jones, Richard. 1986. "A spider-eating dragonfly." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 98, 255–256.

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