

Entomological Society of Saskatchewan Inc.

NEWSLETTER

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There is not much news to report this time around but, none-the-less, people have been busy. In addition to the usual entomological field work, a good sized group of society members were in Val Marie in June for the first Grasslands National Park collecting trip. Preparations are also underway for several insect displays to be presented to the public this summer.

I hope the summer is bringing a lot of interesting insect experiences your way, and for those who are able, try to make it out to the various society events coming up.

1. Butterfly census

A reminder that if you are interested in participating in a butterfly census anywhere in the province from late June to late July, please contact Ken Pivnick as soon as possible for information at 975-5270, 975-5272 (work) or 652-5240 (home).

2. Grasslands National Park survey

The first collecting trip to the Grasslands National Park took place June 6 and 7, 1987. A good contingent of entomologists turned out for the occasion; Peter Mason, Martin Erlandson, Keith Moore and Mia, Peter Harris and wife, Frank Bellamy, Lloyd Harris, Bruce Neill, John Kozial, Rosemarie DeClerck, Kevin Floate and Dale Parker.

Collecting efforts were concentrated in the west block of the proposed park. Although the weather was extremely hot and windy, we managed to collect a fair diversity of insect fauna. Specimens are being pinned and labelled and will be stored at the Agriculture Canada Research Station, Saskatoon. Anyone interested in identifying the collected insects should contact;

P.G. Mason,
M.E. Erlandson,
K.C. Moore

Agriculture Canada
Research Station
107 Science Crescent
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
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The next field trip will be held July 25 and 26, and will concentrate on the east block. Hope to see everyone out in force.

3. Report of the Student and Amateur Encouragement Committee

Summer has arrived in full stride and, with it, the following planned activities of the S.A.E.C.:

- 1) July 16 - Agriculture Canada Field Day. The S.A.E.C. will be presenting a display of live and preserved insects similar to the display set up at this event last year.
- 2) August 13-14 - Tentatively planned for these two days is an insect display at Market Mall in Saskatoon. If you missed the one last year, be sure to catch it this year. The display will include live and preserved pond and river insects, field pests, household insects, tropical insects, etc.
- 3) August - The S.A.E.C. has again been approached by the staff of the Beaver Creek Conservation Area to present a slide show and nature walk highlighting the insect fauna of the area. This event is tentatively set for August.

The S.A.E.C. events held last summer were a great success due in large part to the many volunteers who gave their time and energy. If you are interested in participating in the upcoming events contact Kevin Floate at the Dept. of Biology, University of Saskatchewan.

-Kevin Floate

4. University of Saskatchewan News

Dr. Cedric Gillott is back in Saskatoon (and well tanned) after his sabbatical leave in Australia. In addition to experiencing the climate and social life in Canberra, Dr. Gillott was conducting research at the Entomological Division of C.S.I.R.O. (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization). A group of four researchers (Dr. Gillott, Lindsay Barton Browne, Peter Smith and Keith Binnington) was measuring juvenile hormone levels in female sheep blowflies and relating this information to reproductive cycles. They were also looking at female blowfly receptivity and male mating performances. According to Dr. Gillott, his stay in Australia was both very productive and enjoyable.

Congratulations go out to Lloyd Dodsall; who successfully defended his Ph.D. thesis entitled "The impact of methoxychlor on aquatic insects in the Saskatchewan River System". Dr. P.P. Harper, a well-reputed stream ecologist at the University of Montreal, was the external examiner. Lloyd, a graduate student in the Dept. of Biology at the University of Saskatchewan, worked under the supervision of Dr. Dennis Lehmkuhl.

5. A potential new pest in Saskatchewan - The Russian wheat aphid

The Russian wheat aphid, Diuraphis noxia (Mordvilko) is known to occur in Southern Russia, the area around the Mediterranean sea, South Africa, Argentina, Mexico and the United States. If this aphid continues to increase its distribution in the United States, its range may soon include the Canadian Prairies.

(continued)

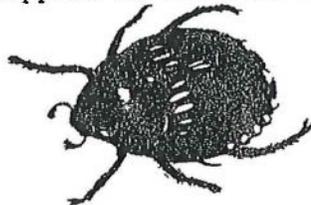
Apparently this aphid was originally introduced into North America via Mexico in the early 1980's. Since then it has steadily increased its distribution to include eight states in the Great Plains to the south of Saskatchewan. As of June 19, 1987 the Russian wheat aphid has been located in cereal grain fields as far north as central Wyoming and central South Dakota. It is anticipated that this aphid will likely be found in Montana, North Dakota and possibly Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba either late this summer or early next summer.

In appearance, the Russian wheat aphid resembles many of the other aphids attacking cereals. It is lime-green, dusted with white, spindle-shaped and less than 1/10 of an inch (2 mm) long. However, this aphid has: (1) extremely short antennae, (2) a characteristic projection just above the tail, which makes it look like it has two tails or a forked tail, and (3) lacks prominent cornicles or tubes on the abdomen that are typical of other aphids.

The preferred host plants are barley and triticale, but it will also feed upon a number of other grasses including Agropyron (wheat grasses), Bromus and Phleum (Timothy).

Initially crop damage is characterized as small circular areas or strips in the field where the plants are stunted or discolored. Affected plants usually become discolored with purple or white stripes along their leaves in the longitudinal axis, which are caused by a toxin that is injected into the plant as the aphid feeds. Plants with as few as two or three aphids may show these symptoms. Heavily infested plants will appear prostrate or flattened. After heading, some heads will have a twisted or distorted appearance because the head is trapped by the tightly curled flag leaf. At this stage, most Russian wheat aphids are feeding on the stem within the flag leaf sheath. This often results in infertile florets and occasionally the death of the entire head. The aphid's habit of causing infested leaves to remain tightly curled makes it difficult for predaceous and parasitic insects to locate and attack aphids. Similarly, it also makes it difficult to achieve good insecticide coverage.

If this aphid manages to overwinter in our temperate climate, it is likely to replace grasshoppers as the most important insect pest of cereals in Saskatchewan.



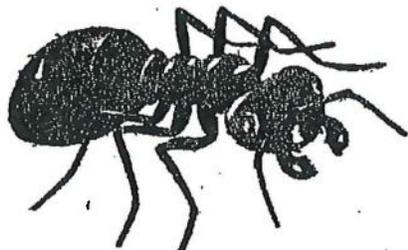
- Lloyd Harris
Saskatchewan Agriculture

6. An open letter to E.S.S. members

One of the functions of the E.S.S. is to bring together people of similar entomological interests at provincial, national and even international levels. For example; in the February 1985 issue of the E.S.S. newsletter there is a letter from a Swedish entomologist who wishes to contact people interested in selling or exchanging insects of several Coleopteran families. Unfortunately, the E.S.S. executive does not have a complete list of the specific entomological interests of individual members, which makes it difficult to pass on such requests to the appropriate people.

In the coming months I will be making an effort to contact people to determine what their entomological interests are. However, it would make my job MUCH easier if members would write to me and express their interests in a specific, informative manner (e.g. if you have an interest in the ecology of long-horned wood-boring beetles - say so). Possibilities include insect photography, ecology of pond insects, weevil taxonomy, control of insect pests of canola etc.

There is a wealth of knowledge to be drawn upon from E.S.S. members. It is foolish not to make the attempt to learn where this knowledge lies. Look at the membership list attached to this newsletter. If the space marked "Occupation/INTERests" under your name is blank or needs to be updated, help out your society by making your interests and other concerns known. You can do so by writing to me at the following address:



-Kevin Floate
Dept. of Biology
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Sask.
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7. Tidbits - From the Ent. Soc. of Manitoba Newsletter 14(1) Spring 1987.

LIVE MATERIAL REQUESTED

Mr. Mike Elliston, an amateur entomologist and member of the Lepidopterists' Society, requests your assistance in locating live adults of Anisota manitobensis (Saturniidae), a small moth native to Manitoba. Mr. Jim Tuttle, one of Mike's associates in the Lepidopterists' Society, has been preparing a book on the Saturniidae of North America. The book is complete except for information about A. manitobensis.

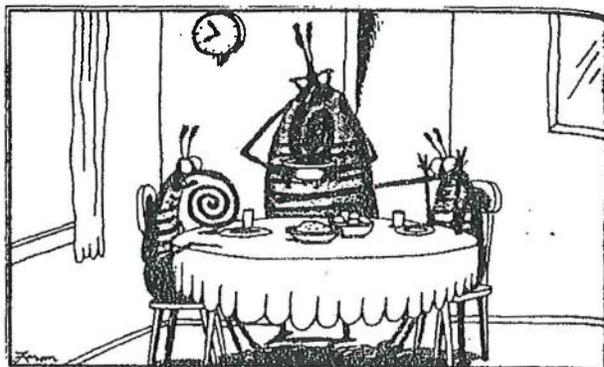
The life history of this insect is poorly known. The adults fly from mid-June to about the end of the first week of July. The larvae feed mostly on burr oak, but have been known to occur on hazelnut. Jim would like to obtain information about the life cycle by rearing larvae from eggs, because attempts to locate the larvae in the field have not been successful. For this purpose, a minimum of one adult female is needed in order to obtain eggs.

This insect has been taken near East Winnipeg just east of the floodway, not far from Dugald Road. This might be a starting point for a search. If any of you are on a collecting trip during the time when the adults are flying, Mike would appreciate knowing if you spot or collect any. If you'd like to see the adults, pinned specimens can be found in the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, and in the J.B. Wallis Museum in the Department of Entomology at the University of Manitoba.

You can call Mike Elliston during the day at (204) 956-1720, extension 236, or in the evening at (204) 222-1689, if you have any information for him, or would like to know more about the project.

NEW ENTOMOLOGY DEPARTMENT HEAD AT UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Congratulations to Dr. Reinhart Brust, who is appointed head of Entomology as of July 1, 1987. Dr. Brust first joined the Department of Entomology in 1959 to work on his M.Sc. degree. He became an academic member of the University of Manitoba in 1965, and was made full professor in 1973. He replaces Dr. Cam Jay, who has been Department Head since 1981.



"Mom! He's going it again!"