

***Proxenus hospes*, a new species for the Belgian fauna (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae, Hadeninae)**

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Samenvatting. *Proxenus hospes*, een nieuwe soort voor de Belgische fauna (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae, Hadeninae)

Het eerste, en tot nog toe enige, Belgische exemplaar van *Proxenus hospes* (Freyer, 1831) werd op licht verzameld te Esneux (Luik) op 24 oktober 1996, leg. P. Cluck. Deze soort werd nooit eerder uit België vermeld.

Résumé. *Proxenus hospes*, une espèce nouvelle pour la faune belge (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae, Hadeninae).

Le premier, et jusqu'à maintenant le seul exemplaire, de *Proxenus hospes* (Freyer, 1831) fut capturé à la lampe le 24 octobre 1996 à Esneux (Liège) par P. Cluck. Il s'agit de la première mention de cette espèce en Belgique.

Key words: *Proxenus hospes* – Faunistics – Belgium – First record.

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The first, and as far as known, the only Belgian specimen of *Proxenus hospes* (Freyer, 1831) was caught on light on 24 October 1996 at Esneux (Province of Liège), leg. Pierre Cluck. The specimen was slightly worn. Although it was captured already in 1996, the species has never been published for the Belgian fauna before, except for the information on the internet (Fibiger & Skule 2007, De Prins & Steeman 2008), and the note in van Kuijk & Almekinders (2008: 107).

P. hospes is unicolorous grey-brown with almost no markings on the wings, and therefore has a rather dull appearance. An ill-defined black dot is present in the postdiscal area of the forewing. *P. hospes* is very similar to *P. lepigone* (Möschler, 1860) but both species occur allopatrically (Fibiger & Hacker 2007: 146).

The species has a general Atlantico-Mediterranean distribution. In Europe it has been recorded from: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France (Mainland, Corsica), Great Britain, Greece (Mainland, Crete, Several Dodekanese Islands), Italy (Mainland, Sardinia, Sicily), Malta, Portugal, Spain (Mainland, Baleares), Switzerland (Fibiger & Skule 2007, Robineau 2007: 121). Recently, the species has also been recorded from the Netherlands: Retranchement (Zeeuws-Vlaanderen), 19 August 2007 (van Kuijk & Almekinders 2008: 106). In Turkey, the species occurs in the warm and wet areas under tea cultivation along the coast of the Black Sea and also along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea (Hacker 1990).

P. hospes is surprisingly absent from North Africa and in the Levante (Hacker 2001), but this could point to the fact that this taxon is phylogenetically an isolation of the Trans-Palaeartic *P. lepigone* during various Pleistocene area shifts (Fibiger & Hacker 2007: 146).

In general, *P. hospes* is a rare species at the borders of its area though it can be sometimes abundant, like e.g. in the Alicante area (De Vrieze 2003: 71) or in the Madrid region (Fernández *et al.* 2006: 312).

The caterpillar feeds on various herbaceous plants among which *Plantago* sp. and it hibernates (Porter 1997: 140). There are two flight periods a year: March-June and August-October. In the extreme south, as on Crete or Sicily, even a third generation may be produced (Fibiger & Hacker 2007: 147). The Belgian record is of a late second-generation specimen. The species prefers warm, humid habitats.

Systematics

In the list of Noctuidae of Fauna Europaea (Fibiger & Skule 2007), the species is mentioned as *Proxenus hospes*. However, in Fibiger & Hacker (2007: 146) *Proxenus* is treated as a subgenus of *Athetis* Hübner, 1821 and hence the species is mentioned there as *Athetis (Proxenus) hospes* (Freyer, 1831).

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