

Psammotis pulveralis (Lepidoptera: Crambidae), a new species for the Belgian fauna

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Abstract. The first Belgian specimen of *Psammotis pulveralis* (Hübner, 1796) was observed during a nocturnal excursion at Rongy (Province of Hainaut) on 01 August 2009. Information on the biology and distribution of this species is presented.

Samenvatting *Psammotis pulveralis* (Lepidoptera: Crambidae), een nieuwe soort voor de Belgische fauna

Het eerste exemplaar van *Psammotis pulveralis* (Hübner, 1796) werd gevonden tijdens een nachtvangst in Rongy (Provincie Henegouwen) op 1 augustus 2009. De biologie en verspreiding van deze soort worden kort besproken.

Résumé. *Psammotis pulveralis* (Lepidoptera, Crambidae), une espèce nouvelle pour la faune Belgique.

Le premier exemplaire belge de *Psammotis pulveralis* (Hübner, 1796) fut trouvé lors d'une excursion nocturne dans une forêt à Rongy (Province du Hainaut) le 1^{er} août 2009. Des informations concernant la biologie et la distribution de cette espèce sont présentées.

Key words: *Psammotis pulveralis* – Faunistics – First record – Belgium.

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Figs. 1–2. *Psammotis pulveralis* (Hübner, 1796). Belgium, Hainaut (Henegouwen), Rongy, Bois de Rongy, 01.viii.2009, leg. Werkgroep Bladmineerders. Photo's Steve Wullaert.

Introduction

On 1st August 2009, the Workgroup Leafminers organised an excursion to a forest near Rongy (province of Hainaut). Together with Chris Snyers and Dries De Vreeze, the author collected a lot of leaf mines in the forest during daytime and at night moths were attracted to sugar, wine-ropes and at light. With the first two methods 47 species were recorded and on light 152 different species were noted. Among these was a rather small moth that we could not identify at first sight. It resembled *Pyrausta despicata* (Crambidae) or some species of Herminiinae (Noctuidae). It turned out to be the first specimen of *Psammotis pulveralis* (Hübner, 1796) (Crambidae: Pyraustinae) ever recorded in Belgium.

Features

Wingspan 23–25 mm. Forewing broad, pointed at apex, ochreous irrorate ferruginous; first line indistinct, angled, consisting of a sparse scattering of dark scales; second line fine, straight, bent above middle; subterminal line obscure, slightly darker than the ground colour, parallel to termen; discal spot crescentic; veins in terminal region darker than ground colour, reddish brown as other markings; fringe ochreous with two broken ferruginous lines. Hindwing full and broad, light ochreous finally irrorate fuscous brown; postmedian line fine, dark reddish brown, curved parallel to termen; a rather broad brownish subterminal band and fine fuscous terminal line; fringe whitish with broken brown subbasal line.

The labial palpi of this species are protracted, not ascending, and are hardly longer than the head (Goater 1986: 79–80).

Biology

Psammotis pulveralis flies in June and July and a second generation starts in August until September. This second generation occurs only on the continent. (Goater 1986: 80). In West Germany the species has been recorded from 22 June till 20 August (Mörtter & Kinkler 2011: 108).

The species has as hostplants *Mentha aquatica*, *M. piperita*, *M. arvensis* and *Lycopus europaeus* (Lhomme 1935: 104). In localities where the hostplant occurs the moths can easily be disturbed from the vegetation. The grey-violet caterpillars with blackish head can be found on the underside of the leaves during August and September (Spuler 1910: 222, Lhomme 1935: 104).

Distribution

Psammotis pulveralis is widespread in Europe, but is missing on most of the Islands except the Britain Isles, Corsica and Sardinia. The species is also present in most of the countries on the continent, but there are still no data for Belarus, Czech Republic, Portugal, Slovenia, Ukraine, and a few smaller countries. In the Benelux the species was missing thus far only in Belgium (Karsholt & van Nieuwerkerken 2007).

In The Netherlands, *Psammotis pulveralis* was found for the first time already in 1875 by Van Medenbach de Rooy in the city of Arnhem, a second specimen was found later near Nijmegen, both in Gelderland (de Graaf & Snellen 1879). Till 1923 some more single specimens were found in the provinces of Gelderland, Noord-Brabant and Limburg. But then it took 63 years before the species was observed again: Kortgene in Zeeland (Kuchlein 1993: 299).

In the British Isles the species is found as a scarce immigrant which can temporarily establish there from time to time, as at Folkestone and in the Isle of Wight in 1869 (Goater 1986: 79–80, Kimber 2009). It took more than one hundred years to find it again, on 28 July 1995 there was a specimen lured by a U.V. light in North-East Dorset and a second specimen the same night in

Hampshire. In 2006 there were even 4 specimens captured in England. All of them in the month of July in Weymouth, Portland and Trigon (Terry Box 2009).

The species is recorded from all the Bundesländer in Germany (Gaedike & Heinicke 1999: 123) though never abundant. Mörtter & Kinkler (2011: 195) mention some recent records from Rheinland-Pfalz, Nordrhein-Westfalen and Saarland.

In France the species is mainly known from the north and the west, but it is never common and has been observed from July till September. Lhomme (1935: 103) gives the following départements: Ardenne, Aube, Doubs, Eure, Eure-et-Loire, Gironde, Indre, Landes, Maine-et-Loire, Mayenne, Nord, Oise, Hautes-Pyrénées, Seine-et-Marne, Seine-et-Oise, Deux-Sèvres, and Vienne.

In Sweden the species is observed more frequently, like on 27 July 2009 on the small Island of Öland nearby the south-east coast of Sweden, where 15 specimens were observed by Norra Möckelby in the small village Gårdby (Unger 2009).

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