

Eilema rungsi (Toulgöet, 1960) a new species of Arctiinae for the Maltese Islands (Lepidoptera: Erebidae, Arctiinae)

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Abstract

Eilema rungsi (Toulgöet, 1960) is here recorded for the first time from the Maltese Islands.
KEY WORDS: Lepidoptera, Erebidae, Arctiinae, *Eilema rungsi*, Malta.

Eilema rungsi (Toulgöet, 1960) una nueva especie para Malta
(Lepidoptera: Erebidae, Arctiinae)

Resumen

Eilema rungsi (Toulgöet, 1960) se cita por primera vez para Malta.
PALABRAS CLAVE: Lepidoptera, Erebidae, Arctiinae, *Eilema rungsi*, Malta.

Introduction

Eilema rungsi (Toulgöet, 1960) is the smallest member of the genus, with a wingspan of 16-22mm. So far this species has been recorded in Europe from the coastal areas of Portugal, Spain, the Balears, Italy and Greece, and elsewhere from Morocco. Adult moths are on the wing between April and October (FIBIGER *et al.*, 2011).

Material examined: MALTA, 1 ♂, Żebbug, 8-XI-2020, at light [18W Actinic light], Catania leg.

Discussion: The subtribe Lithosiina is represented in the Maltese archipelago by four taxa including the newly recorded species. *Eilema caniola* (Hübner, [1808]), which was first recorded by VALLETTA (1973) is a common, widely distributed species with two generations per year. The second species is *Eilema marcida* (Mann, 1859) which was erroneously determined as *Eilema pygmaeola* (Doubleday, 1847). *Eilema marcida* also has two broods per year. It is on the wing from mid-May to mid-June and again mid-July to mid-September. (PRZYBYŁOWICZ & SAMMUT, 2011). *Lithosia quadra* (Linnaeus, 1758) has been recorded from two specimens, a male from Mellieha collected in 1976 by L. Cassar (SAMMUT, 2000) and another male from Naxxar collected in 1996 by A. Seguna. *Lithosia quadra* (Linnaeus, 1758) is not known to breed in



Malta (PRZYBYŁOWICZ & SAMMUT, 2011). *Eilema rungsi* (TOULGÖET, 1960) is the fourth species in this subtribe to be recorded in the Maltese Islands.

Eilema rungsi (Toulgöet, 1960) was first discovered in 1953, when Charles Rungs and Thami Benmessaoud captured a small series from Merdja Bokka (Morocco). Hervé De Toulgöet, described the species based on these specimens in 1960. The epithet “*rungsii*” is given in honour of Charles Rungs. Later in 1977, Paolo Parenzan discovered this species in Brindisi which is in the extreme South-Eastern part of the Italian Peninsula (PARENZAN, 1977). In a forthcoming paper, SCALERCIO *et al.* (2020) refer to recent new records of *E. rungsi* in Calabria, Italy between August and November of 2019. DERRA & HACKER (1983) collected a specimen from central Greece, which they described as *Pelosia hellenica*. However, this taxon is now considered a synonym of *Eilema rungsi*. (FIBIGER *et al.*, 2011). *Eilema rungsi* is also known from Spain and Portugal. (GÓMEZ *et al.*, 2020). The early stages and food plants of *E. rungsi* are not yet known although it is suggested they are marshy and halophilous plants.

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