

# On the presence of *Ephestia woodiella* Richards & Thomson, 1932 in the Maltese Islands (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae, Phycitinae)

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## Summary

The species *Ephestia woodiella* Richards & Thomson, 1932 is recorded for the first time from the Maltese Islands.

**Keywords:** Lepidoptera, Pyralidae, Phycitinae, *Ephestia woodiella*, new records, Maltese Islands.

## Sobre la presencia de *Ephestia woodiella* Richards & Thomson, 1932 en Malta (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae, Phycitinae)

## Resumen

Se registra por primera vez para Malta, la especie *Ephestia woodiella* Richards & Thomson, 1932.

**Palabras clave:** Lepidoptera, Pyralidae, Phycitinae, *Ephestia woodiella*, nuevo registro, Malta.

## Introduction

The taxon *E. woodiella* Richards & Thomson, 1932, at one time was considered a subspecies of *Ephestia unicolorella* Staudinger, 1881 (Roesler, 1973). Gumhalter (2019), following Fauna Europaea, considered *Ephestia woodiella* Richards & Thomson 1932, as a subspecies of *Ephestia unicolorella* Staudinger, 1881.

Leraut (2014) established that *E. unicolorella* is distinct both from *E. parasitella* and from *E. woodiella*. According to Leraut (2014), *E. unicolorella* is known from Morocco, Turkey, Iran, and Syria, but not from Europe.

According to Sammut (2020), Roesler (1973) included Malta in the distribution of the species *E. parasitella unicolorella*. Karsholt & Razowski (1996) in their checklist of European Lepidoptera listed Malta in the distribution of *E. parasitella parasitella* Staudinger, 1859. Recently, Gumhalter (2019) included Malta in the distribution of *E. unicolorella woodiella* (Richards & Thomson, 1932). This is incorrect.

From some “old” material sent to F. Slamka by one of the authors (PS) for identification, he identified a male *Ephestia* as belonging to the taxon *E. woodiella*. Independently, a second author (AS) had sent similar material to J. Asselbergs, amongst which two *Ephestia* specimens were determined by genitalia as belonging also to *E. woodiella*.

*Ephestia woodiella* is a widespread European species, occurring also in countries along the Mediterranean and the larger islands within it. The larvae are said to feed on dry vegetable matter. Unlike the other *Ephestia* species occurring in Malta, this does not appear to be a pest of stored grain

and foods. The localities from where the three specimens have been recorded are open countryside, mostly garigue. All specimens have been recorded using 150w MV light.

### Material examined

MALTA: Siġġiewi, Ghar Lapsi, 1 ♂, 23-IV-1999 [GP. Slamka 2157], P. Sammut leg; Qormi, Wied il-Kbir, 1 ♂, 21-IV-1999 [GP. Asselbergs 5800], Seguna leg; Dwejra, l/o Rabat, 1 ♀, 9-VI-2007 [GP. Asselbergs 5810], Seguna leg.

### Conclusion

Locally, the genus *Ephestia* Guenée, 1845, is represented by five species, namely *Ephestia kuehniella* Zeller, 1879, *Ephestia welseriella* (Zeller, 1848), *Ephestia elutella* (Hübner, 1796), *Ephestia parasitella* Staudinger, 1859 and the new *Ephestia woodiella* Richards & Thomson, 1932. We propose the Maltese vernacular name “Efestja ta’ Wood” for the new record *E. woodiella*.



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