

# *Axylia putris* (Linnaeus, 1761) new to the Maltese Islands (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae)

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## Abstract

*Axylia putris* (Linnaeus, 1761) is reported for the first time from the Maltese Islands. Distribution and habits of the adult are included. A Maltese name is proposed for this new record.

**Keywords:** Lepidoptera, Noctuidae, *Axylia putris*, Maltese Islands.

*Axylia putris* (Linnaeus, 1761) nuevo para Malta  
(Lepidoptera: Noctuidae)

## Resumen

*Axylia putris* (Linnaeus, 1761) se menciona por primera vez para Malta. Se incluye la distribución y hábitat del adulto. Se propone un nombre maltés para este nuevo registro.

**Palabras clave:** Lepidoptera, Noctuidae, *Axylia putris*, Malta.

## Introduction

The genus *Axylia* Hübner, [1821] is distributed throughout the Palaearctic, Afrotropical and the Indomalaya ecozones. There are 26 species worldwide but a single European representative (Fibiger, 1990). In the past, *Axylia putris* (Linnaeus, 1761) was mentioned by Borg (1932), the brother of the botanist Professor Ganni Borg as present in Malta, however this has always been considered as a misidentification, since no physical specimens could be traced and because his work contains several mistakes with species which have never been recorded from Malta. It is estimated that around 25% of the species mentioned in his work are doubtful or misidentified (Sammut, 2000).

## Material

MALTA, Gozo Island, Dahlet Qorrot, 1 ♂, 11-VI-2021; Dahlet Qorrot (22 ♂♂, 4 ♀♀) 17-X-2022 at 250W MV light, leg. J. Agius (in coll. J. Agius).

## Discussion

On mainland Europe, *Axylia putris* (Linnaeus, 1761) is reported as flying during June and July with an occasional second brood during September. Due to Malta's location at the centre of the Mediterranean, it does not come as a surprise that local species have a different voltinism and/or flight

period from the same species found further north. Considering that this species has been recorded in both summer and autumn and that the autumn brood is prolific and contains a mix of males and females, it can easily be assumed that *Axylia putris* (Linnaeus, 1761) is breeding in Gozo. The larvae feed on a variety of plants such as cereals, *Galium*, *Lotus*, *Polygonum*, *Rumex*, *Trifolium*, *Urtica* and *Vicia*. Most of these plants are widespread across the Maltese Islands so it could be just a matter of time that this species is recorded from other localities.



**Figure 1.** *Axylia putris* (Linnaeus, 1761) - MALTA, Gozo Island, Dahlet Qorrot 3 ♂♂, 1 ♀

The species is new to the Maltese lepidoptero fauna. I propose the Maltese name Axilja, after a transliteration of the genus.

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