

Pseudosophronia exustellus (Zeller, 1847) a new species for the Maltese Islands (Lepidoptera: Gelechiidae)

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Abstract

The genus *Pseudosophronia* Corley, 2001 and the species *Pseudosophronia exustellus* (Zeller, 1847) are recorded for the first time from the Maltese Islands. Notes on the distribution and habitat are included.

KEY WORDS: Lepidoptera, Gelechiidae, *Pseudosophronia exustellus*, new record, Maltese Islands.

Pseudosophronia exustellus (Zeller, 1847) una nueva especie para Malta
(Lepidoptera: Gelechiidae)

Resumen

El género *Pseudosophronia* Corley, 2001 y la especie *Pseudosophronia exustellus* (Zeller, 1847) son registrados por primera vez para Malta. Se incluyen notas sobre su distribución y hábitat.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Lepidoptera, Gelechiidae, *Pseudosophronia exustellus*, nuevo registro, Malta.

Introduction

The Genus *Pseudosophronia* Corley, 2001, comprises of two species: *Pseudosophronia exustellus* (Zeller, 1847) and *Pseudosophronia cosmella* (Constant, 1887). Up until now the family Gelechiidae in Malta includes 49 species, 48 in the subfamily Gelechiinae Stainton, 1854 and 1 in the subfamily Pexicopiinae Hodges, 1986 (SAMMUT, 2020).

Discussion

The checklist of European Gelechiidae covers 865 species, belonging to 109 genera, with three species records which require confirmation (HUEMER, 2020). In this checklist *Pseudosophronia constanti* (Nel, 1998) is synonymized with *Pseudosophronia exustellus* (Zeller, 1847) (HUEMER & KARSHOLT, 2020). Its distribution in the Mediterranean countries include Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy including Sicily (RATNASINGHAM *et al.*, 2007). It is also recorded from Israel (BIDZILYA, 2019).



Material Studied

MALTA, Gozo Is., Marsalforn, Qbajjar area, 1 ♂, 25-V-2006 [at light], A. Seguna leg (in coll. Seguna); Rabat, Mtahleb, 1 ♂, 2 ♀♀, 19-VI-2012, A. Seguna leg (two in coll. Seguna and 1 ♀ in coll. Sammut).

The life history of this species is not yet known although it is mentioned that *Quercus ithaburensis* Decne, is a host plant for the larvae in Israel (BIDZILYA, 2019). However, this requires verification. Locally the larval host plant has not been identified. This species was recorded using a 160 w MV light. The biotope from where it was collected from Gozo is close to a rocky shore dominated by marsh grasses and xerophytic Mediterranean plants and that of Malta is a garrigue with a small grove of *Pinus halepensis* Mill.

Conclusion

To date this species is only known from these four specimens. Further investigations are encouraged to determine its local status. We propose the Maltese name “Bahrija żghira tal faxxi bojod”.

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