

DATA ON THE TERRESTRIAL ISOPODA FAUNA OF THE ALSÓ-HEGY, AGGTELEK NATIONAL PARK, HUNGARY

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Abstract: Field surveys in dolines of Alsó-hegy, Aggtelek Karst (Hungary) yielded 10 terrestrial isopod species. Despite of the relatively low species richness, we would like to emphasize the high naturalness of the area indicated by the presence of endemic and rare species.

Key words: Isopoda, karst, doline, endemism, Aggtelek.

INTRODUCTION

The locality of the first faunistic data on Hungarian terrestrial isopods were published from the Aggtelek Karst. Dated back to 1856 and 1875, Schmidl and Frivaldszky described *Titanethes graniger*, recently known as *Mesoniscus graniger* (Frivaldszky, 1875) from the cave systems of the Aggtelek Karst. Over hundred years later KONTSCHÁN (2004) has compiled data collected by several non-isopodologist researchers and listed six widely distributed European species (*Ligidium hypnorum* (Cuvier, 1792), *Haplophthalmus danicus* Budde-Lund, 1880, *Haplophthalmus mengii* Zaddach, 1844, *Hyloniscus riparius* (C. Koch, 1838), *Orthometopon planum* (Budde-Lund, 1885), *Porcellium collicola* (Verhoeff, 1907), *Protracheoniscus politus* (C. Koch, 1841)). Our present sampling was the first designed faunistic research on surface active oniscids in the Aggtelek Karst area. Moreover, MLEJNEK et al. (2001) reported occurrences of *M. graniger* from caves of Aggtelek area.

The Hungarian Northern Ranges (Északi-középhegység), probably owing to its extension and high variety of geomorphological and geological traits, has unique isopod assemblages as it is proven by ALLSPACH (1996), KONTSCHÁN (2002, 2003) and KONTSCHÁN et al. (2006). Here we find Carpathian

species (*Ligidium intermedium* Radu, 1950, *Hyloniscus transsilvanicus* (Verhoeff, 1901), *Trachelipus difficilis* (Radu, 1950) together with Atlantic-Alpine (*Porcellium conspersum* (C. Koch, 1841), *Armadillidium opacum* (C. Koch, 1841) isopods while the typical Central and Eastern European faunal elements (e.g. *P. collicola*, *P. politus* or *Lepidoniscus minutus* (C. Koch, 1838) can also be found. Moreover, the area harbours troglobitic isopods and one endemic species (*Haplophthalmus hungaricus* Kesselyák, 1930) that is considered (KESSELYÁK 1928) as an ancient form of other *Haplophthalmus* species.

Our research named “Dolina 2007 Expedition” aimed to discover and observe the soil and litter dwelling macroinvertebrates (Mollusca, Isopoda) in and around the dolines of the plateau of Alsó-hegy with special respect to microhabitat characteristics. The primary results of the research are stated in the recent paper.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sampling area

The Alsó-hegy (UTM: DU78) is the eastern extension of the Aggtelek Karst area that is geologically connected to the Slovak Karst and is a part of the Aggtelek National Park. The sampling area is

Table 1. Sites, localities and date of field surveys in 16 dolines in Alsó-hegy of the Aggtelek karst.

| Doline | Settlement | EOV X | EOV Y | Date |
|--------|-------------|--------|--------|------------|
| 1. | Bódvaszilas | 773216 | 358520 | 16.08.2007 |
| 2. | Bódvaszilas | 773116 | 358579 | 16.08.2007 |
| 3. | Bódvaszilas | 772964 | 358643 | 16.08.2007 |
| 4. | Bódvaszilas | 772891 | 358743 | 16.08.2007 |
| 5. | Bódvaszilas | 773505 | 359347 | 17.08.2007 |
| 6. | Bódvaszilas | 773445 | 359423 | 17.08.2007 |
| 7. | Bódvaszilas | 773325 | 359320 | 17.08.2007 |
| 8. | Bódvaszilas | 773228 | 359345 | 17.08.2007 |
| 9. | Komjáti | 774101 | 358952 | 17.08.2007 |
| 10. | Bódvaszilas | 773983 | 358927 | 17.08.2007 |
| 11. | Komjáti | 774079 | 359070 | 18.08.2007 |
| 12. | Komjáti | 774202 | 358950 | 18.08.2007 |
| 13. | Komjáti | 774455 | 359408 | 18.08.2007 |
| 14. | Komjáti | 774595 | 359407 | 18.08.2007 |
| 15. | Komjáti | 774583 | 359330 | 18.08.2007 |
| 16. | Komjáti | 774719 | 359332 | 18.08.2007 |

characterized by numerous depressions (sinkholes and dolines) in Triassic limestone formed in shallow seas approximately 210–240 million years ago. The area is covered with deciduous forests with dominating species of oak, hornbeam, beech, ash and maple. Table 1 contains data of each doline including locality and the EOV (Egységes Országos Vetület or Unified National Projection System) coordinates.

Sampling methods

Manual samplings have taken place between 16th and 18th August, 2007. We have chosen 16 dolines of similar traits (Table 1). During time sampling, two persons (F. V. and A. N.) have collected isopods for 20 minutes in each site, spending 120 minutes with sampling altogether in each doline. Time sampling provides data eligible in respect of quantitative data analyses.

We used the keys of KESSELYÁK (1928), SCHMÖLZER (1965), GRUNER (1966) and SCHMIDT (1997) for identification of woodlice specimens. Species names are used according to SCHMALFUSS (2003). Samples are stored in alcohol (70 %) in the reference collection of the Institute for Biology at the Szent István University, Faculty of Veterinary Science.

Data were handled by the 'mefa' package (Sólymos 2008) in the R environment (R Development Core Team 2007).

RESULTS

Altogether 10 isopod species were captured in the dolines studied. All the species found are considered as natives, including several rare ones with small local distribution range (HORNUNG et al. 2007).

The pigmy, rare *H. hungaricus* is the only Hungarian endemic isopod with a distribution restricted to the Hungarian Northern Ranges (FORRÓ & FARKAS 1998, VILISICS 2007). The troglobitic *M. graniger* is common in the cave systems of Aggtelek karst and the surrounding countries (e.g. Slovakia, Romania, Serbia), but its occurrence on the surface is a new data for the species' Hungarian distribution.

The Central- and Eastern European species *P. politus*, *L. minutus*, *O. planum* and *Trachelipus ratzeburgii* (Brandt, 1833) are inhabitants of natural deciduous forests in Hungary and Central Europe. These isopods along with less frequent species indicate a quasi natural area under low human disturbance. The Carpathian element *T. difficilis* (occurring in N-Romania, NE-Hungary and S-Poland) is among the rarest species in Hungary, with only two published data from the past 80 years (ALLSPACH & SZLÁVEZC 1990, ALLSPACH 1996).

The Atlantic-Alpine *P. conspersum* (e.g. Holland, NE-France, Germany, Switzerland, Czechia, Slovakia) is also a rare isopod for Hungary that occurs in higher elevations (above 500 m) in the Northern Ranges, like the Bükk (FORRÓ & FARKAS 1998) and

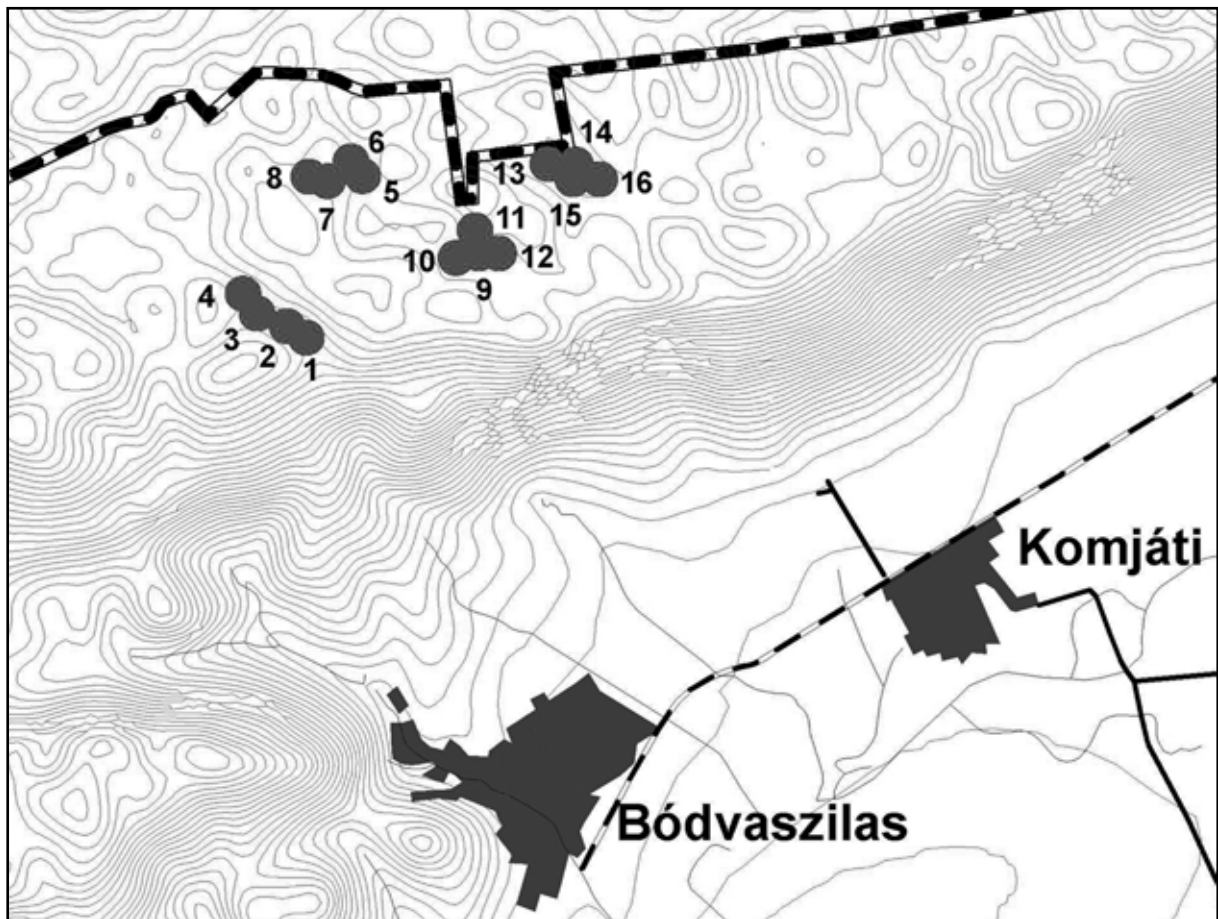


Figure 1. Map of location and numbering of the surveyed dolines.

the Zemplén Mts. (ELEK et al. 2004, KONTSCHÁN et al. 2006).

Common European species (*T. provisorius*, *T. ratzeburgii* and *L. hypnorum*) possess a wide distribution area in Europe inhabiting sites of high natural quality in Hungary (HORNUNG et al. in press).

Species occurrences in dolines of Alsó-hegy

The first number indicates the number of doline, the number in brackets refers to the number of collected individuals.

Ligiidae

Ligidium hypnorum (Cuvier, 1792) (9 dolines): 1 (1); 2 (1); 3 (3); 4 (1); 5 (5); 6 (1); 7 (3); 8 (4); 15 (1)

Trichoniscidae

Haplophthalmus hungaricus Kesselyák, 1930 (10 dolines): 1 (2); 4 (4); 6 (2); 7 (1); 8 (9); 9 (1); 11 (1); 12 (4); 13 (2); 14 (5).

Mesoniscus graniger (Frivaldszky, 1875) (1 doline): 15 (1)

Trichoniscus provisorius Racovitza, 1908 (7 dolines): 2 (2); 4 (2); 6 (1); 7 (1); 8 (7); 9 (3); 14 (5)

Philoscidae

Lepidoniscus minutus (C. Koch, 1838) (15 dolines): 1 (3); 2 (7); 3 (7); 5 (3); 6 (3); 7 (3); 8 (1); 9 (5); 10 (2); 11 (3); 12 (3); 13 (2); 14 (8); 15 (11); 16 (2)

Agnaridae

Orthometopon planum (Budde-Lund, 1885) (8 dolines): 1 (2); 2 (3); 3 (3); 8 (3); 11 (2); 12 (3); 13 (2); 15 (1)

Protracheoniscus politus (C. Koch, 1841) (15 dolines): 1 (6); 2 (2); 3 (3); 4 (1); 5 (7); 6 (16); 7 (11); 8 (10); 9 (16); 10 (7); 11 (16); 12 (10); 13 (7); 14 (5); 15 (18); 16 (4)

Trachelipidae

Porcellium conspersum (C. Koch, 1841) (6 dolines): 4 (2); 5 (1); 6 (1); 8 (10); 14 (6); 15 (1)

Trachelipus difficilis (Radu, 1950) (12 dolines): 5 (12); 6 (11); 7 (11); 8 (1); 9 (8); 10 (26); 11 (10); 12 (30); 13 (18); 14 (24); 15 (15); 16 (7).

Trachelipus ratzeburgii (Brandt, 1833) (5 dolines): 1 (1); 2 (3); 6 (1); 8 (2); 14 (3)

CONCLUSIONS

Here we present faunistic data on surface dwelling isopods from the Aggtelek Karst region. The lack of introduced, cosmopolitan or native generalist isopods might indicate a relatively high nature conservancy value of the area. Moreover, we believe that the presence of rare and sensitive species indicates naturally formed isopod assemblages with a species composition undisturbed from

human activity. However, the prevalence of such unique assemblage is no longer guaranteed under the given anthropogenic impacts (e.g. illegal logging) increasing in the area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our research was funded by the ÁOTK-NKB 15714, and National Research Fund (OTKA T 43508) grants. We thank to Jana Štrichelová and Dr. Ivan H. Tuf from the Palacky University, Olomouc for their help in the Slovak translation. This is paper No. 1 in „Dolina 2007 Project”.

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Submitted: 26.2.2008

Accepted: 18.4.2008

Published online: 24.4.2008