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FIRST RECORDS OF THREE *CIONUS* SPECIES (COLEOPTERA: CURCULIONIDAE) FROM ALBANIA AND GREECE

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Košťál, M. & Link, A.: First records of three *Cionus* species (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) from Albania and Greece. Nat. Croat., Vol. 30, No. 2, 519–522, Zagreb, 2021.

Cionus griseopubens Wingelmüller, 1914 and *C. hypsibatus* Wingelmüller, 1914 are reported for the first time from Albania, and *C. neglectus* Košťál & Caldara, 2019 from Greece. The localities of all three species are exactly identified, described and their geographical relations to the main distribution areas are given. *Verbascum longifolium* Tenore is confirmed as a host plant of *C. hypsibatus* and *C. griseopubens* in the Tomorr Mt range, Albania.

Key words: fauna, Curculionidae, *Cionus*, Albania, Greece

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U radu se govori o prvom nalazu vrsta *Cionus griseopubens* Wingelmüller, 1914 i *C. hypsibatus* Wingelmüller, 1914 za Albaniju te *C. neglectus* Košťál & Caldara, 2019 za Grčku. Daju se točni lokaliteti i njihovi opisi za sve tri vrste te njihov geografski odnos prema arealu vrsta. *Verbascum longifolium* Tenore potvrđena je kao biljka domaćin za *C. hypsibatus* i *C. griseopubens* u planinama Tomorr u Albaniji.

Ključne riječi: fauna, Curculionidae, *Cionus*, Albanija, Grčka

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Cionus* Clairville, 1798 is the most species-rich genus of the tribe Cionini (Košťál & Caldara, 2019). It comprises more than 100 species occurring in four anticipated speciation centrums in the Mediterranean, East Asian, Oriental, and Afrotropical zoogeographic realms. In the Palaearctic realm alone, 16 species new to science were recently published (Košťál & Caldara, 2019). Host plants of all Palaearctic species belong to the families Scrophulariaceae and Paulowniaceae. However, the biology of many species is not known in detail.

The distribution of the genus *Cionus* in Greece, and especially in Albania, has been but little investigated. The results of the entomological expedition of the German Institute of Entomology (DEI) to Albania conducted in 1961 reported only four, mostly common species (Dieckmann, 1984). We had an opportunity to collect a relatively rich material of this genus at high elevations in both countries and contribute to the knowledge of its distribution in the Balkan Peninsula.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Abbreviations used

NHMW: Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, Austria

SDEI: Senckenberg Deutsches Entomologisches Institut, Müncheberg, Germany

During May 2016 the second author undertook a collecting trip to north Greece in the course of the Rhodope expedition of the Curculio-Institute. Phytophagous beetles, especially of the superfamily Curculionoidea, were the main subject of the research. Sweeping (grass netting) of the vegetation was used for collecting weevils from the herb layer. Two localities in the Rhodope Mountains situated in the Greek region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace close (6–9 km) to the Bulgarian border,

Fig. 1. Katafigio Livaditi, Greece, the locality of *Cionus neglectus* (photo: A. Link)

Fig. 2. Bargulas, Albania, the locality of *Cionus hypsibatus* and *C. griseopubens* (photo: M. Košťál)

Dasiko Chorio and Katafigio Livaditi (Fig. 1) were visited. Both localities are situated in the submontane mixed pine-beech forest at elevations of 1,230 m a. s. l. and 1,367 m a. s. l. respectively with many openings supporting rich perennial vegetation. An unidentified *Verbascum* sp., probably *V. longifolium* Tenore, was observed in both localities. During early June 2018, mid-June and mid-September 2019, the first author conducted field trips to mountains in Albania with a special focus on subalpine weevil fauna. Two closely situated sites in the southernmost part of Tomorr Ridge close to the village of Bargulas were visited. The first site at the elevation of 1,650 m a. s. l. situated in the saddle and on the east-facing slopes is characterised by subalpine vegetation on limestone bedrock with *Verbascum longifolium* and scattered *Pinus* sp. The second site (Fig. 2) at the elevation 1,900 m a. s. l. is characterised by subalpine to alpine treeless vegetation on west-facing slopes on rocky limestone bedrock with a scattering of the same *Verbascum* species as at the first site. Visual checking of plants was used as a collecting method on both sites.

Specimens were identified by a comparison with the following type material: the neotype of *Cionus griseopubens* Wingelmüller, 1914 (coll. NHMW), the lectotype of *C. hypsibatus* Wingelmüller, 1914 (coll. NHMW) and the holotype of *C. neglectus* Košťál & Caldara, 2019 (coll. SDEI). Male genital structures were dissected and mounted on a board. All specimens were identified by the first author.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cionus griseopubens Wingelmüller, 1914

Collected by visual checking of leaves, flowers, and ground rosettes of *Verbascum longifolium*: Bargulas pr. Berat env. 6 km NE, N 40°37.1´ E 20°11.4´, 1650 m a. s. l., 5. vi.2018 1 ♂ 2 ♀♀ (leg. coll. M. Košťál); Bargulas pr. Berat env. 6 km NE, N 40°37.1´ E 20°11.0´, 1900 m a. s. l., 16.vi.2019 14 ♂♂ 5 ♀♀ (leg. coll. M. Košťál); Bargulas pr. Berat env. 6 km NE, N 40°37.1´ E 20°11.0´, 1900 m a. s. l., 12.ix.2019 1 ♂ 2 ♀♀ (leg. coll. M. Holecová), more specimens (obs. M. Košťál). **New faunistic records for Albania**.

Cionus hypsibatus Wingelmüller, 1914

Collected together with *C. griseopubens*: Bargulas pr. Berat env. 6 km NE, N 40°37.1´ E 20°11.0´, 1900 m a. s. l., 16.vi.2019 1 ♂ 1 ♀ (leg. coll. M. Košťál). **New faunistic record for Albania**.

Cionus neglectus Košťál & Caldara, 2019

Collected by general sweeping in the following two localities: Katafigio Livaditi, N 41°18'46" E 24°40'15", 1230 m a. s. l., 25.v.2016, 1 ♂ (leg. coll. A. Link); Kavala, Dasiko Chorio, N 41°19'46" E 24°43'03", 1367 m a. s. l., 25.v.2016 1 ♂ (leg. coll. A. Link). **New faunistic records for Greece**.

Cionus griseopubens was described from relatively low altitudes in Greece (Wingelmüller, 1914). In Greece, this species often occurs at altitudes below 500 m a. s. l. As well as in Greece, *C. griseopubens* is found also in North Macedonia and Bulgaria, where it was collected up to 1,700 m a. s. l. The host plant was until now unknown, however it was supposed it could be a species of *Verbascum* (Košťál & Caldara, 2019), most likely from the *V. longifolium* group. We confirmed *V. longifolium* to be a host plant of this species in the Tomorr range.

Cionus hypsibatus and *C. neglectus* were described from Bulgaria. These species, which belong to different groups of the genus, are typical montane species preferring altitudes above 1,300 m a. s. l., often reaching 2,500 m a. s. l. Montane species of *Verbascum* were suspected to be host plants of both species (Košťál & Caldara, 2019), most likely those from the *V. longifolium* group. Based on data from Albania, we have confirmed *V. longifolium* to be one of the host plants of *C. hypsibatus*.

All three species are endemic to the Balkan Peninsula, especially of its western part. Mountains of the Western Balkans are a complex but relatively compact system of mountain ranges without any larger discontinuities. Therefore all three *Cionus* species reported here, either bound to or able to inhabit high altitudes could form relatively large distribution areas throughout the mountains of the Western Balkans. Hence, the occurence of *C. hypsibatus* and *C. griseopubens* in Albania, as well of *C. neglectus* in Greece was to be expected. In this study, we have confirmed this expectation.

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