

MOTHS CONGREGATING AROUND THE NEST OF POLISTES WASPS

During the morning of September 6 while searching for *Catocala*, I noticed a *polistes* sp. (probably *pallipes*) nest suspended from the under surface of a 2×4 which helped to support a corrugated tin roof of an open lean-to shed attached to the end of a barn. This shed was situated at the edge of a second growth hardwood forest on the summit of a small mountain (Second Watchung) about one mile south of Mt. Bethel, Somerset County, New Jersey. Congregated around the nest were a dozen or more noctuids *Amphipyra pyramidoides* Gr. in a quiescent resting position. Some were almost touching the nest yet the wasps in attendance appeared to pay no attention to the moths or vice versa. The next day I noticed that some moths were present in a similar position although in smaller numbers. Several days later no moths were present. As I had not noticed such an event before it caused me to speculate as to the reason why the moths had congregated in such an unusual place. This particular species of moth is very common and is strongly attracted to light as well as to sugar or other sweets as every lepidopterist knows who has "sugared" for moths at night.

It does not seem likely that the moths congregated around the wasp nest for protection and I understand that *Polistes* wasps; as far as is known, furnish their larvæ with masticated caterpillars and flies and not with honey. In this case the moths could not have been attracted by honey in the cells. One of my friends, namely David G. Shappirio of Washington, D. C., who is a keen student of Hymenoptera suggested to me in a letter that the wood the *Polistes* used in making paper for their nest may have contained sweet sap which might have attracted the moths. If any entomologists reading this "note" have had similar experiences or can offer an explanation of this phenomenon it would be very interesting if they would publish their comments or observations.

—G. W. RAWSON.



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