

**SCRAPTIA FUSCULA (MÜLL.) (COL.: SCRAPTIIDAE) IN
GLOUCS.; WITH NOTES ON THIS AND S. TESTACEA ALLEN**

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RECENTLY Mr P. F. Whitehead informed me that he had taken a specimen of *Scraptia* (13.vi.2000) in East Gloucestershire, which he believed to be *S. fuscula* – a determination duly reported as verified by him by comparison with examples which I sent to him. This is not only a new county record, but also the first for *S. fuscula* outside the Windsor Forest area in modern times, which the captor kindly authorises me to publish; it is therefore of much interest. Before 1940 (see below) there was only J. F. Stephens' ancient record from Ripley, Surrey, which I do not now consider entirely above suspicion because the habitat he gave (flowers in gardens) seems most unlikely for a *Scraptia*.

Buck (1954: 17) was incorrect in stating that "since the discovery of *S. testacea* Allen . . . it is doubtful to which of the two species earlier records apply" and likewise in giving identical distributions for them. I had already pointed out in separating the two species (Allen, 1940: 58) that all specimens in our collections purporting to be *fuscula* had been found to be *testacea*, and the same appears true today for other than Windsor material. Donisthorpe's (1940) valuable observations on mating habits, etc. are actually of *testacea*, written before the separation was published.

Nothing has, I believe, appeared in our literature concerning the range of the latter species abroad, which turns out to be, as far as known, very limited. Whereas *fuscula* is a mid-European species reaching northward to England in a few localities, *testacea* seems to be north-west European, in England occurring as far north as Cumbria, and unknown in, for instance, Germany. It has been met with very rarely in France (north and south) and may perhaps be regarded as the western counterpart of *S. ferruginea* Kies. from south-east Europe. Méquignon (1947) records *S. testacea* as follows: Versailles (Seine et Oise), jardin Saubinet, two males, June 1901, coll. A. Dubois; La Boude and Avignon (Vaucluse), coll. Ch. Fagniez. All other exponents of *S. fuscula* that he examined in the national collections were correctly named. Later records, if any, are unknown to me.

The coexistence of the two species in the Windsor Forest area – chiefly the Great Park – is of much interest (our third species also, *S. dubia* (Ol.), recorded from "near Windsor" by Stephens on the authority of Leach, may have existed there in earlier times). No difference in habit, habitat, or distribution there of the two species is perceptible. They can be beaten from old oaks and more rarely other trees (such as hawthorn, elm) where rotten wood or wood-mould is present. Their relative incidence, however, has fluctuated noticeably over the years. About 1942, the true *S. fuscula* was first detected in the Great Park, on one fairly old oak near the north-west perimeter of the area, where specimens could usually be obtained in season (June/July).

Towards the close of the decade a marked expansion took place, the species having apparently spread either from this tree or from elsewhere to other parts of the park. After that, for a number of years, *fuscula* was the one more often met with, *testacea* being decidedly hard to find; but by the 1970s, and onwards, there was no clear difference in frequency. They were, however, seldom if ever found together on the same tree. Males appear rarer and far shorter-lived than females, which in some years may persist as late as early August.

References

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A late occurrence of the Mother of Pearl moth *Pleuroptya ruralis* (Scop.) (Lep.: Pyralidae)

Whilst emptying my garden Robinson trap on the morning of 21 October 2000, I was surprised to find a fresh example of the Mother of Pearl moth *Pleuroptya ruralis*. Reference to Barry Goater's *British Pyralid Moths* (1986. Harley Books), confirmed my suspicion that there was no mention of a second generation in this species. Another example, undoubtedly the same moth, appeared in the trap a couple of days later on 24 October. The normal flight period is given as July and August, although I regularly see it in the trap from the middle of June; during 2000, I trapped a total of 67 examples between 28 June and 29 August before the October examples. Weather conditions overnight from 20 to 21 October 2000 comprised mild temperatures and rain. Other species in that trap night included two immigrants – the Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella* (D.& S.) (Pyralidae) and the Dark Sword-grass *Agrotis ipsilon* (Hufn.) (Noctuidae), as well as the Pale Mottled Willow *Paradrina clavipalpis* (Scop.) which is also partially migratory. It is interesting, though not necessarily significant, to compare this isolated late record of a pyralid moth with that of another allegedly single-brooded summer species in the same family – *Chrysoteuchia culmella* (L.) – of which an example was taken in Hertfordshire on 10 September 2000 by Colin Plant (*Ent. Rec.* **112**: 272). – TONY STEEL, 57 Westfield Road, Barnehurst, Kent DA7 6LR.



Allen, Anthony Adrian. 2001. "Scryptia fuscula (Muell.) (Col.: Scryptiidae) in Gloucs.; with notes on this and *S. testacea* Allen." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 113, 1–2.

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