



NEWSLETTER of the Wisconsin Entomological Society

Volume 3 Number 1

James W. Mertins, Editor

January, 1975

EDITOR'S NOTES

Happy New Year, everybody!

It seems that once again the necessity arises for a plea to the membership for news, articles, anecdotes or contributions of any sort for publication in the NEWSLETTER. This is your publication and deserves your support. For the people outside the Madison-Milwaukee area it is even more important to contribute something, because this publication is one of the few vehicles for your active participation in WES. Two examples of what you can do are contained in this issue; contributions reporting recent collecting experiences. This shows that even in the late fall and winter there are entomological stories to be lived. It is true that things may slow down a bit at this time of year, but surely the rest of the members are not sitting on their hands for the rest of the year! These notes (see WISCONSIN INSECT NOTES) are not very long, and even shorter items would be more than welcome. Think about it; then do something, and tell us about it.

NOTICES

For sale. Very large selection of foreign exotic insects, especially butterflies, moths, and beetles. Many large showy species. I have taken over the business of the late Mr. George Schirmer and will welcome any inquiries or correspondence. I will also consider trades for certain species. Please contact Dan Capps, 231 Powers Ave., Madison, WI 53714 (tel. 249-7271 evenings).

Wanted to trade. Native or exotic foreign beetles; have numerous perfect mounted Catocala moths (mostly duplicates) for exchange. John Hempel, 1602 N. Concord Dr., Janesville, Wis. 53545.

Wanted. Records by county for all Wisconsin Rhopalocera, Sphingidae, Saturniidae, and Catocala. For more details write Roger Kuehn, 5042 N. 61 St., Milwaukee, Wis. 53218.

Wanted. Cockroaches, any species, but especially non-domestic one; live or preserved in alcohol. If possible, location and habitat data on specimens would be greatly appreciated. Ralph Howard, Dept. of Entomol., University of Wisconsin, Madison 53706.

The NEWSLETTER of the Wisconsin Entomological Society is published two to four times yearly at irregular intervals. Please send all news, notes, contributions and other items for the NEWSLETTER to the Editor, Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

NOTICES (cont.)

Wanted. Confirmable reports or specimens from termite infestations within Wisconsin. Please contact Glenn Esenther, U.S. Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, with any information you may have.

Wanted. Pseudoscorpions - live or preserved in alcohol. Any species. Will accept any specimens you don't want, or have house pseudoscorpion, Chelifer cancroides, for trade. Jim Mertins, Dept. of Entomology, University of Wisconsin, Madison 53706.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

(Please submit items of interest for this column to the Editor.)

Bill Sieker, Past-President of WES, reports that he is feeling better all the time and hopes to be back to the office by mid-January after his recent visit to Madison General Hospital for surgery. He has been recuperating at home for several weeks.

Dr. Michael Klein, WES member from Wooster, Ohio, will address the 29th annual Wisconsin Pest Control Conference with Industry the third week in January at Lake Geneva. His topic will be "The Status of the Japanese Beetle in Wisconsin". Drs. Walt Gojmerac and Chuck Koval will also address the conference.

Prof. E. Paul Lichtenstein is currently on a 9-month work-study leave from the U.W.-Madison to cooperate with associates in Germany, near Munich, in their research on insecticides in soils.

Ken MacArthur will be retiring soon from his post as Curator of Invertebrate Zoology at the Milwaukee Public Museum.

Prof. Roy Shenefelt departed Madison on January 4 for a 6-month leave of the entomology department which will take him to all of the major museums of Europe in order to examine type specimens in the family Braconidae for the world catalog he is preparing. Mrs. Shenefelt is accompanying him to carry his equipment(!) and also to visit as many art museums as she can.

Prof. Harry Coppel has been appointed to the Forest Pest Control Advisory and Steering Council of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for a 6-year term.

New Members

Scott W. Martin..... 5930 Meadowood Dr., Madison, WI 53711

Daniel J. Martin..... 5930 Meadowood Dr., Madison, WI 53711

Changes of Address

James C. Parkinson..... 1016 Grand Ave. Apt. 6, Wausau, WI 54401

Jim Schrader..... 109 Shepard Terr., Madison, WI 53705

Allen Young..... Apartado 2732, San José, Costa Rica, C. A.

Member Résumés

Brothers Scott (10) and Dan Martin (14) are up-and-coming entomologists and new members of WES. The Editor is personally aware of their interest in nature, collecting insects, and particularly in Arachnids, especially tarantulas, of which they had 2 at last report.

HISTORY OF WISCONSIN ENTOMOLOGY - V

It seems appropriate in this fifth installment of the history of entomology in Wisconsin, which has thus far concerned itself with developments and individuals from the southeastern part of the State, that we should deal with the Milwaukee Entomological Society. Since the last issue of the WES NEWSLETTER the MES has officially become affiliated with the state-wide organization, but there is a long and rich history leading up to that event.

The Milwaukee Entomological Society was organized in that city during the year 1934, and has functioned continuously ever since. Prime movers in the early days of the society, and for that matter throughout its succeeding years, were Arthur Moeck, Dr. Alvin Throne, and Ken MacArthur. These men saw the need for an organization in which the amateur and professional entomologists of the area could get together to exchange ideas, experiences, or specimens, and enjoy the company of others with like interests. They all served repeatedly as officers of the society. During the first quarter century or so of its existence, meetings were held in the homes of members on a more-or-less monthly basis. The warm, homey atmosphere thus provided led to a more informal kind of meeting than many scientific societies hold, but encouraged easy discussion and access amongst the members regardless of age or station. Most times both members and spouses were in attendance, and sometimes even a few "larval" entomologists. Of course, this combination led to some very enjoyable socializing in addition to the program of the evening. And indeed the programs were instructive and entertaining as well. Talks were illustrated, frequently by specimens from the speaker's own collection; and because of the convenience of being in the same home with the collection, many specimens were readily available.

With the completion of the superb new downtown facilities of the Milwaukee Public Museum in the early 1960s, Mr. MacArthur arranged for MES to hold its meetings in the second floor lounge of that building. This allowed better access to the collections of the museum and resulted in many fine programs presented by Ken, and later, also by his assistant, James Lawton. During the long history of the MES Art Moeck and Al Throne were frequent speakers as well; Mr. Moeck, a Milwaukee public school principal, on his world-renowned researches on, and collection of, the fritillary butterflies, and Dr. Throne, a professor of botany at the U. W.-Milwaukee, on his excellent collection of Neuroptera. Before his death in the early 1970s, Mr. Moeck arranged for the disposition of his worldwide collection of Lepidoptera in the Milwaukee Public Museum, and since his recent retirement, Prof. Throne has deposited part of his collection there as well.

WISCONSIN INSECT NOTES

Cave Insects by Jim Mertins

How many of our members have ever explored a cave? For me it was a new and untried experience until last November 12, when I was privileged to participate in such an endeavor.

After the WES meeting in early November I was approached by Bob Ehr, a graduate

WISCONSIN INSECT NOTES (cont.)

student in plant pathology and amateur spelunker (that's a caver), who proposed that I join him in attempting to add to the known natural history of Bear Creek Cave in Sauk County, Wisconsin. The cave entrance is in a stone quarry on a privately owned farm in Wisconsin's driftless southwestern quarter. There is imminent danger of damage or complete loss of the cave through additional development of the quarry or sale of the farm into uncertain ownership. At present, access to the cave is available through the landowner on a (fortunately) limited basis. However, the future of the cave is in limbo, and with the paucity of such natural caverns in Wisconsin, the preservation of every one is important.

In behalf of the Wisconsin Speleological Society, Mr. Ehr is behind a movement to explore the cave and accumulate information on its various physical, geological, biological, and historical aspects. This information has since been organized into a body of evidence for submission to the Nature Conservancy (Wisconsin Chapter) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in order to convince them that the cave is worthy of purchase and preservation. I was invited to participate as a kind of semi-official observer and witness to the Arthropod fauna of the cave.

The weather that Saturday morning was cool, grey and misty, but I was soon to see for myself that just about any weather is good caving weather, because the conditions within are very little affected by the vagaries without. We were joined on the expedition by Mike Wopat, a journeyman geologist, who spent most of the time we were inside pacing off distances, estimating ceiling height, and inspecting formations, fissures, and crevices. I crawled around a lot on my hands and knees, sometimes because that was as tall as you could be and still move forward, but mostly in order to better observe the subject of my visit. Bob bounced back and forth between us, but for the most part helped me since I was a complete novice as a spelunker.

The only other cave I have ever visited is the Cave of the Mounds, a commercial cavern near Blue Mounds, and believe me, there is little to compare! Bear Creek Cave is much less accessible and considerably the smaller of the two, but I am told that for a Wisconsin cave it is considered quite large; it is the premier Wisconsin cave in regard to variety of formations displayed, and most importantly, it is in a relatively pristine state of preservation. The passage goes in for 950' and drops about 30' in elevation, has several large rooms, and a locked iron grating over the entrance.

Anyone who goes collecting in such a cave expecting to find white crickets, blind salamanders and fish, or albino shrimp, is going to be disappointed. To be sure, there were a couple of hundred bats hanging on the walls and ceilings, but no albino animals. However, we did collect a few arthropods, and although so far none of them has proved to be exclusively a cave dweller, to me each was an interesting find. On the walls near the entrance we found several specimens of a noctuid moth which no one here in Madison was able to name with certainty. It has since been identified by specialists at the U.S. National Museum as Hypena humuli (Harris). Deeper within the cave, resting on the walls, we collected at least one species of heleomyzid fly (Aecothea sp.) with the aid of our lantern and miner's lamps; on the walls and rocks we found a sphaerocerid fly (Leptocera sp.) in some number; and on the surface of the pools of water on the floor, thrombiculid mites and two species of Collembola (Arrhopalites and Onychiurus) were active, and busily consuming detritus and especially a few dead flies (genus Sciara, family Sciaridae). Under some of the rocks we collected a number of specimens of a rather common species of terrestrial isopod (Crustacea), Cyclisticus convexus (DeGeer), and by chance, under one rock, perhaps the most interesting find of the day, a small, white, immature millipede in the order Chordeumida. It is possible that this animal is restricted to the cave

WISCONSIN INSECT NOTES (cont.)

environment. Last, but not least, was the specimen I collected in the cave without knowing it. Upon my return home, I was shedding the several layers of muddied clothing I'd brought back, when there on my T-shirt I saw a tiny brown spot -- move! As I reached for it I realized too late what it was - a flea, probably from the bats in the cave. Alas, it was too fast for my grasp, and there was one less Arthropod to identify from the expedition.

I enjoyed this novel experience very much, and would highly recommend it to anyone who has the opportunity to similarly explore this unique habitat type with an experienced spelunker and the proper equipment. The insects you will see are certainly not giant swallowtails or goliath beetles, but they are nevertheless interesting creatures.

Winter Collecting by Bill Phillipsen

On 28 December, 1974, Jim Mertins and I undertook a cocoon hunting expedition north of the town of Waunakee. The weather was brisk with a stiff wind, but the sky was bright and blue contrasting vividly with the drifting snow.

We drove along keeping watch for fence rows containing wild cherry trees. This type of habitat is especially productive for Saturniid silk moth cocoons. Whenever we stopped to explore these field borders, we were rewarded with many cocoons. In fact, in 2 hours of collecting we had collected over 300 cocoons. Of these, over 100 were sound prometheas, along with one sound polyphemus, and one sound cecropia cocoon. We also collected approximately 200 old or bird damaged promethea and three unsound cecropia cocoons.

Now is a good time to collect promethea which hang from cherry twigs like Christmas tree ornaments and often have a dead brown curled leaf wrapped about them for camouflage. The leaf is usually indicative of a fresh sound cocoon. Cecropia cocoons can most often be found a foot or two off the ground and attached to seedlings, brush, or to the fences themselves. Due to the snow depth it is not a good time of the year to collect polyphemus or luna moth cocoons, as these will almost always be amongst leaves on the ground.

All a person needs to insure a successful cocoon hunt are a sharp pair of eyes and a small pocket knife. You can hold your cocoons in the refrigerator until April or May and then bring them into room temperature. They will emerge in three or four weeks approximating the emergence of their wild cousins. Or if they are kept warm (and protected from desiccation) at this time, many will brighten your winter by emerging prematurely. The resulting almost flawless specimens, after being spread and suitably mounted can make excellent gifts.

MISCELLANEOUS RAMBLINGS

One of the truly giant personalities in the early history of American entomology was Charles Valentine Riley. He was the Missouri State Entomologist for a while during the 1870s, and later Head of the U. S. Division of Entomology in Washington, D. C. A lucid illustrator and entertaining writer, he published an unbelievable number of papers, reports, and books. He was a taxonomist and famed for his powers of observation and understanding of insect ecology. C. V. Riley was a central figure in two of the earliest successful cases of biological insect control. In one he provided resistant rootstocks to France for use in saving the wine industry which was being destroyed as the grape phylloxera aphid killed the European vines. In the other, he directed the importation program of the famous vedalia beetle, a ladybird beetle that saved the California citrus industry from the cottony-cushion scale.

His pride in this latter achievement led him to name his daughter, Catherine, after this famous insect. That's right, his daughter's name was also C. V. Riley, but the "V" stood for VEDALIA !!

WISCONSIN ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please Print:

Last Name First Name

Address: Street City State Zip

Organization represented (if any)

Title or Occupation Phone: (include area code)

Individual membership (\$2.00 per year)

Organization membership (\$10.00 per year)

Sustaining membership (\$25.00 or more per year)

General Interest Area

Aquatic Insects _____ Collecting and/or Taxonomy

4-H or Scout Member _____ Insect Photography

Extension Worker _____ Physiology

Life History, Biology, & Behavior _____ Apiculture

Other _____ Specify _____ Pest Control

Specific Interests (Order, Family, Genus) _____

If you are an authority for certain insect taxa, would you be willing to identify Wisconsin specimens for members? Yes _____ No _____

Make checks payable to Wisconsin Entomological Society and mail to the Treasurer, William Hilsenhoff, Dept. of Entomology, 237 Russell Labs., U. Wisc., Madison, Wisc. 53706.

Wisconsin Entomological Society
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Address correction requested