



First Austrian record of the gall midge *Mayetiola hellwigi* (Diptera: Cecidomyiidae)

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The Austrian gall midge fauna must be considered very well known. SKUHRAVÁ & SKUHRAVÝ (2008) reported the local fauna of gall midges from as many as 274 sites situated throughout the country and at altitudes from 115 m asl up to 2500 m asl. These sites were investigated mainly during the years 1991–1993. After these thorough investigations, the total known fauna of gall midges amounted to 396 species, of which 352 belong to subfamily Cecidomyiinae, i.e. basically the plant-gall inducing species. By the mid-1980'es, the total known species number was 256, so the mentioned investigations have added considerably to the checklist. Thus, not only is the Austrian gall midge fauna very well known, also the knowledge of the distribution of species within the country and in relation to important environmental factors – such as altitude – is far above average. Nevertheless, for a generally understudied taxonomic group like Cecidomyiidae – many groups of small Diptera alike – there will always be a number of species that went “under the radar”. Oversight may be due to limited distribution range of the species or to annually fluctuating occurrence patterns, with outbreak and trough years. Here, I report the first record to Austria of one species of gall midge, which was made during a visit in the summer of 2016.

Mayetiola hellwigi (RÜBSAAMEN, 1912), which is monophagous with *Brachypodium sylvaticum* (Poaceae) as its main host plant, and *B. pinnatum* as an alternative host, was found in a mixed deciduous forest within Schloßpark Schönbrunn (Wien, Hietzing district, 200 m a.s.l.) on 20.07.2016. The species induces characteristic saddle-shaped galls of the stems of the host grass (Fig. 1). The whitish larvae are concealed in the gall under the leaf sheath. There is almost always a single larva per gall and one gall per stem, but often several stems per tussock are galled. Larvae were found in the galls, but pupation takes place in the gall and even empty galls are easily recognizable, resulting in a prolonged period of potential recording. The species was only found at the said site, despite active search on both its host plants at other locations (i.e. Kalkalpen, Leonstein, 700–900 m asl; Kalkalpen, Hengstpass 700–900 m asl, Kalkalpen, Rossleithen 800 m asl; NP Donau-Auen, Orth/Donau 150 m asl).

The occurrence of *Mayetiola hellwigi* in Austria was to be expected from its overall distribution in Europe, in which Austria has constituted a lacuna. The geographical distribution of the species ranges from the British Isles and Denmark to Hungary and Romania,



Fig. 1: Gall of *Mayetiola hellwigi* on stem of *Brachypodium sylvaticum*. The larva is situated under the leaf sheath just above a node and below the conspicuous brownish swelling.

with an apparent gap in the Alps. However, it seems to only have scattered occurrences throughout its range (BRUUN & SKUHRAVÁ 2011).

Zusammenfassung

Der Erstnachweis der Gallmücke *Mayetiola hellwigi* aus Österreich wird beschrieben. Gallen mit Larven wurden im Juli an der wichtigsten Wirtspflanze der Gallmücke, der Wald-Zwenke (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), im Schloßpark Schönbrunn in Wien gefunden. Die Art wurde trotz aktiver Suche an anderen Lokalitäten nicht angetroffen.

References

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