

# BUPRESTIS

A semi-annual newsletter devoted to the dissemination of information about buprestids and students of this group

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Dear friends,

believe me, I am always trying to serve you with the latest news as soon as possible. And here they are. Our new BUPRESTIS.

Already a time ago Chuck Bellamy wrote me that he needs for the catalogue the complete citations of your papers. So please, if you send me or him copies of your papers and the title of the journal is abbreviated, add the complete reference.

Please send me your news until 15.December 1996.

Best wishes

Hans Mühle  
Editor

## A. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

Sylvie **Barbalat**'s main interest is to find out which forest structure is the most favourable for *Buprestidae*, *Cerambycidae*, phytophagous *Scarabaeidae* and *Lucanidae* as well as to work out an atlas for the *Buprestidae* and *Cerambycidae* of Switzerland. Therefore she wants to get in contact with entomologists who may have collected *Buprestidae* and *Cerambycidae* in Switzerland and can support her work with data.

Helmut **Schmitz** from the Zoological Institute of the University of Bonn is searching for an answer of the development of the infrared receptor of *Melanophila acuminata*, a paired metathoracic pit organ on the ventral side (see picture - the organs are marked with a ring)) and wants to get in contact with persons knowing something about it. A model of the possible function of these structure is that the thermophile beetle is using it to detect the best fitting place where to put the eggs in. Dying or fresh dead wood is heating up more intensively than wood in good conditions and this allows the beetle to find the best substrate.

## B. SPECIES WANTED FOR RESEARCH OR EXCHANGE

Rick **Westcott** and a colleague in Mexico are working towards an annotated checklist of the Buprestidae of Jalisco. If you have material from that state, he would appreciate it if you would either send him a list of species and their label data or, if undetermined, send specimens to him for identification.

## C. REQUESTS FOR LITERATURE

## D. FORUM

Chuck BELLAMY has sent the following thoughts:

### Buprestids on the Internet

The Transvaal Museum has now established a World Wide Web (WWW) home page and the Coleoptera Department has its own pages being added as the time permits. At this time you can view a annotated checklist of the buprestids of Africa, checklist of the *Coraebini* of the world, and an abbreviated catalogue of the *Coraebini* of Madagascar, a description of my current research plans and a list of my publications.

If you have the ability to browse the web, our home page can be found at:

<http://www-tm.up.ac.za>

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### North America Beetle Database

A combined project known as BIOTA/ITIS is attempting to provide a database for the flora and fauna of North America, north of Mexico, including Canada, the 50 U.S. states and the Caribbean territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The Coleoptera component on this effort is being coordinated by Dr. Margaret THAYER of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. The buprestid database was compiled by Chuck BELLAMY, with critical examination and correction provided by Gayle NELSON and Rick WESTCOTT. The database contains information of all species of native or naturalised species, with author, date, page, subspecies, synonyms, basic geographical information as well as notes on native, introduced, etc. This database is available to anyone who is interested, but you will have to pay the postal costs from South Africa. Eventually we suspect that this will be available over the Internet.

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### Catalogue Update

Since the last issue, the catalogue has continued to progress. I have received substantial contributions of missing or incorrect literature citations from Svata BÍLÝ, Mark VOLKOVITSH, Edo JENDEK and Rick

WESTCOTT. In addition Mark has made a checklist of the Palaearctic Acmaeoderini and Svata promises soon to send the same for the entire subtribe Anthaxiina.

I have taken the past few months to write specific letters requesting literature from a number of colleagues that I do not know personally or have correspondence with. I am somewhat saddened by the lack of response as I have only received reprints from J.GUTOWSKI and no one else. I must ask again your good will and assistance with this project. If I could receive copies of your reprints, then it would be much easier to be certain of adding as many references and taxa as possible.

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### **Types, Private Collections and Ethics**

We have debated the issue of holotype deposition and private collections for several years. Various opinions exist and many remain unconvinced of the need to deposit primary types in public institutions. I can readily understand the arguments that some have made about being left out or excluded by public institutions. I can only advise that as many of our colleagues who retain holotypes should make provisions for the transfer of their collections upon their retirement or death so that these most valuable specimens are protected and preserved.

Another issue regards the proper deposition of specimens acquired through exchange or commercial purchase. Some countries have strict laws about the commercial exploitation of the native fauna, often times this is ignored or knowingly violated by those smuggling specimens out, e.g. Australia. Certain countries have imposed laws requiring that new species from within their borders must have the holotype deposited within a public collection of that country, e.g. Australia, Brasil. Many countries do not have yet such laws but still maintain natural history collections of the highest quality and deserve to retain the types of their own fauna. What I find so egregious is the situation of commercially acquired specimens where the author or authors retain the entire type series in their private collection(s), returning nothing to the country of origin. Take the case of *Metaxymorpha imitator* Sainval & Lander [Sainval, T. & T.Lander. 1994. Iconographie des espèces décrites de genres *Calodema* et *Metaxymorpha* (suite) (Coleoptera Buprestidae). Bulletin de la Société Sciences Nat 81:23-24], of the 14 specimens in the type series, not one specimen, whether a primary or a secondary type, was initially returned to a public collection in Australia. These specimens were collected by Australian collectors, many of them where sold to collectors outside of Australia. Until pressure was put to the senior author of the paper to return the holotype to the Australian National Insect Collection in Canberra, nothing was done.

A similar situation has occurred with the recent description of *Mastogenius (Ankareus) afer* Holynski [Holynski, R. 1993e. Two new African species of *Mastogenius* Sol. (Coleoptera: Buprestidae). Annals of the Upper Silesian Museum, Entomology 4:157-162]. The holotype and 4 paratypes of this new species from South Africa are all retained in the collection of the author. Since South Africa has several large natural history museums that are adequate to care for the many primary types of its unique fauna, is it not reasonable to expect that at least one paratype, if not the primary type, of this species be returned? We are in the midst of a period where we are trying to advocate a similar law to Australia's, requiring that holotypes of new species be returned to a museum within the country.

It seems rather incumbent upon us as scientists, engaged in pursuits of truth, that our own selfish interests must disappear and that the scientific community should come first, in other words, what is best for the most, not just for the few whose personal resources allow them to access to global travel and building up impressive stamp collections that the true scientists are then barred from using. It is still surprising that some of us are not willing or interested even in making their collections available for specific projects. If it is acceptable for the majority of the world's major natural history museums to make their specimens, even holotypes, available for study at great expense and the risks of international postal systems, then not one of us should deny study of specimens that have been acquired through commercial purchase.

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### **Agrilus Authorship**

In the last several years, without much discussion, some of us have accepted that DAHL in 1823 first proposed the generic name *Agrilus*, instead of the subsequent authorship of CURTIS (1825). It should be noted that FISHER, in his 1928 revision of the North American species of *Agrilus*, noted that perhaps the

earliest usage of the genus name was instead by MEGERLE, such was listed by many early entomologists including DEJEAN but not then subsequent to this. Rather than any of us just blindly accepting DAHL instead of CURTIS, shouldn't thorough study of this situation be completed and a general agreement be reached in this case? Although not stated clearly by the ICZN, it seems to me that the 50 year rule about the use of the ignored taxon names (e.g. *Pristiptera*) should also be applied to cases like authorship.



## **TRIALS, TRIBULATIONS AND GOOD TIMES ON A COLLECTING TRIP TO SOUTH AFRICA**

another report by Rick L. WESTCOTT

On 27/28.xi.1995 my good friend and colleague Alan MUDGE and I left Portland, flew to New York via Cincinnati, then from there 14 -1/2 hours non-stop to Johannesburg, South Africa. We had arrived; however, one of Alan's bags had not! Ground transportation had been arranged by our friend Chuck BELLAMY, Transvaal Museum, to depart 29.xi for points south. Instead we collected locally while waiting for the errant bag, which arrived four days later. Something positive? Yes; we collected some different beetles, enjoyed some fine meals and sightseeing in Pretoria, and had greater opportunity to explore the Museum.

On 3.xii we drove over 800 kms under mostly gloomy skies to our first camp, near Middelburg in the Karoo Desert, where threatening rain became but a brief reality in this sere landscape. We continued south through ever-greening countryside to the large industrial coastal city of Port Elizabeth, then inland and westward to our first major collecting site, the beautiful and diverse Baavianskloof Nature Reserve. We stayed in a quaint restored farmhouse, comfortable but without running water (except outside from a cistern) or electricity, there to commune with mosquitoes, baboons and windscorpions. We collected interesting beetles, although relatively few in number.

I broke the handle on our propane stove tank, necessitating us to cook more primitively then backtrack 50 miles to Patensie for a replacement (however, we suspect it was more because Chuck wanted another chance to collect a rare buprestid.!) We spent the night camped up a canyon beside a 'naartjie' (tangerine) orchard

#### Chuck and Rick at Gamkaberg Nature Reserve

populated with beautiful swallowtails--and mosquitoes! Harvest was over, but a few deliciously tree-ripened fruits remained! It rained lightly that night, so while our equipment was drying in the morning I amused myself by chasing the swallowtails. After stopping for Chuck's buprestids--it was very windy, but he got them--we drove the "Garden Route" from Humansdorp to George. The "Garden" was largely invisible due to misty clouds and rain (what can one expect in a coastal rain forest?), and for a moment Alan and I thought we were caught in a time warp back to Oregon! Much of the wonderfully dense and diverse native forest, which contains some very tall trees, has been cut and the land planted with alien pine, eucalyptus and wattle--UGH! No collecting here for us, although by the side of the road we ran across (fortunately not over!) some folks from S. California, one a friend of Chuck's, collecting water beetles. That seemed fitting for the day.

At George, still in a steady rain, we headed north (inland), climbing rapidly into the clouds; though soon the rain abated. Over the pass, through a mountain valley where many hops are grown, and down into the Little Karoo Desert the weather partially cleared; though heavy storm clouds draped the surrounding high mountains. After marvelling over the ostrich herds--Oudtshoorn is the "Ostrich Capital of the World"--we spent the night at Calitzdorp Spa camped on the grass by a picnic table. It was my first experience erecting my new tent in near-darkness; on a stomach empty of all but Castle Milk Stout and peanuts, and discovering I had lost one tie cord...the rest is unprintable!

We spent the next two days at Gamka Mountain Nature Reserve, again listening to baboons bark. A wonderful spot, we had the tent camp to ourselves, complete with running water, shower, flush toilet, propane burners and refrigerator. We were told to drink rain water brought to the camp in a tank, rather than the heavily mineralised tap water. It was delicious; although Alan quit drinking it after I showed him a mosquito larva in my cup! The reserve manager took us on a tour up the mountain into the 'fynbos', a rich and widely variable Mediterranean-type vegetation unique to the cape region of South Africa. We found a wide variety of Buprestidae on the reserve, including a beautiful tufted *Julodis* sp. which this late in the season was quite to my surprise.

One of the surprising *Julodis* sp. on *Lycium*

After a cold night at Anysberg Reserve west of Ladysmith--our westernmost point, interesting though unproductive of bups--we returned to collect in a beautiful canyon, Seweweekspoort, where we had had reasonable success the previous day. On to "Flea Camp", at the foot of the imposing rocky Swartberg: It was an abandoned farm (maybe we know why!) where Chuck had the misfortune to choose the wrong spot to relax (Alan and I decided to take our Milk Stout elsewhere!). However, we enjoyed a fine camp dinner...and so too did a curious tok-tokkie (*Tenebrionidae*).

The next day we visited "World Famous" Cango Caves in the Swartberg. We took the extended tour of these fantastic limestone formations, which included crawling through an opening of only 27 cms. It was no place for a claustrophobic! After stopping in a fairly dry canyon to collect a few *Acmaeodera* spp. (it reminded me of my youth, collecting near my home in W. Los Angeles), we continued on through a transitional vegetation zone, with beautiful scarlet-flowered aloes and other interesting succulent plants, back into the Karoo Desert. At De Rust, only 65 kms from the Indian Ocean, we encountered our hottest temperature, 39 C. But it was a dry heat, not uncomfortable to me. A warm night was spent in a mosquito-infested caravan park at Aberdeen, in the middle of the dry Karoo. Barking dogs and loud neighbours added to its flavour, though Alan might remember it fondly for the scarab beetles he and Chuck collected at lights, oblivious to the jeers of the local gentry. I read my book!

From here on 13.xii we drove the long haul to Pretoria, desperately pausing in a strong wind to collect one last time, boldly stopping just after dark on the outskirts of Johannesburg to sample the local Indian cuisine. Chuck finally got tired enough to let me drive, my first experience on the "wrong" side of the road (intentionally, that is). Would not you know that it was almost entirely in a construction zone--good timing, Chuck!

After more fine food in Pretoria--loved Rose BELLAMY's cooking and the samosas--Chuck, having grown tired of "beating the bush" (and of us, no doubt), deposited Alan and I at Geelhoutbosch Farm, about a 3-hour drive north of Pretoria, just north of Thabazimbi and not far from Botswana. It is a beautiful area of relatively undisturbed bushveld at the NW base of the Waterberg and offered us a great diversity of insect collecting, including many Buprestidae. It is rich in plant life, and the owner, Susan Strauss, who so graciously opened her land and shelter to us, is a self-taught botanist. Needless to say, she was handy for some host records needed for Buprestidae. Our 4-day stay was made all the better by Susan's hospitality, and by the beautiful mountain scenery, kudu steaks, a shower, *Chrysochroa lepida*, *Anadora cupriventris*, a remarkable new species of *Acmaeodera*, goliath beetles (Alan discovered "The Tree"), oospisters and a reasonably ample supply of Milk Stout! Notwithstanding the interesting scenery, flora and fauna in the Eastern and Western Cape provinces, and despite 2" of rain, "The Farm" was the highlight of the trip for Alan and I, perhaps even better than visiting Cango Cave, eating Weet-Bix and drinking Milk Stout! My new tent worked great here (finally learned how to set it up without expletives)--scarcely a drop of water on me--and a "Thermarest" mattress certainly is one of the best investments I have ever made; very comfortable.

Thank you Susan and Chuck for making all this possible!

We didn't see much game on the entire trip--a couple of herds of impala, three kudu and some odds and ends such as brushbuck or steenbok. We heard baboons many times in the Cape, but rarely did I see one; though a troop crossed the road near Thabazimbi. The most interesting animals to me (besides the bups, of course!) were large tortoises in the Cape area--I didn't realise they got so big on the mainland. Alan saw two water monitors. I saw no ophidians except two twig snakes at "The Farm". They are very poisonous but cannot bite unless you play with an adult...but who could ever catch such a thing, let alone want to play with it?! Also, I saw the hind end of a warthog.

Then there was the trip home: Fallout from the big snowstorm in N.Y. delayed our flight from Johannesburg to N.Y. by 14 hours, necessitating two stays at Holiday Inns courtesy of SAA. They allowed us each a transatlantic call home! Although the flight was good for such a long trip and was only half full, I'm happy we changed our seats because the expected squalling baby was in Row 47, right beneath the movie screen--avoid such rows like the plague! I found an entire centre row of seats across which to catch a bit of sleep sometime after our refuelling stop on Ilha do Sal, Cape Verde (what a weird, dried-up island). I could have done without N.Y.: Pushing and shoving our way onto the courtesy bus at 5:45 in the freezing morning (my 4' duffel bag helped!), we arrived to an enormous line at the Delta counter. Because of rescheduling and an overbooked flight, we barely got seats on the plane to Atlanta, which was due to leave at 7 a.m. (it didn't; people were upset--I was upset [who, me?!]; however, not like two burly college students who were shouting obscenities at the agent, who had to call security). Yes, I said "Atlanta"...and from there to San Antonio and Dallas. Then after a beautiful twilight flight over the Rocky Mts., we finally arrived in Portland 12-1/2 hours after departing N.Y.!

We had a great trip to Africa, though I wish that next time we could contact "SCOTTY" to beam us over!

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