

Distribution of *Heteropterus morpheus* PALLAS (Hesperiidae) in Northern Italy

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The species shows a very large distribution. Its habitat reaches from eastern lands of Asia to western lands of Europe. In this continent, it shows a very discontinuous distribution. Its presence is recently confirmed in eastern and central Europe, in the West of France, in the North of Spain (along the Atlantic Coast), in northern Italy (from Piedmont to Gorizia) and in central Italy (very localized) in Lazio (HIGGINS and RILEY, 1975 : 332).

Heteropterus morpheus avoids the mediterranean climate and in Italy is connected with the Appennines. The habitats where it is more abundant are the marshy meadows and along the streams, but sometimes it is present too in arid placed such as the Passes of the Appennines between Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna.

VERITY knew the species of Northern Italy and Lazio (Fig. 1 : R. VERITY, 1940 : 87-89). BASSI collected *Heteropterus morpheus* in a small place of the Tuscan-Emilian Appennines, Vetta Le Croci m. 500, knowing a middle colony between Northern Italy and Lazio (N. BASSI, 1965 : 66). Other localities have been recently confirmed in central Italy, in Marche, Lazio and Abruzzo (Fig. 1 : C. PROLA, P. PROVERA, T. RACHELI, V. SBORDONI, 1978 : 99).

In the Apennines of Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna, I have collected *Heteropterus morpheus* in several localities, but the species seems localized in a small area. It is present especially in the Mugello Valley, where it is often abundant, and in a few near localities. In the West, it lives in the Bisenzio Valley ; in the North, in the Appennines of Pistoia, it gradually disappears ; in the Apuane Alps it has never been collected and in Emilia-Romagna it is connected with the Appennines. In the south of the Mugello Valley, it appears in Pratomagno and in the high valley of Casentino, but in Chianti, influenced by the mediterranean climate, it is totally absent (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Northern Italy. Scale 1 : 6.500.000.

1 : Localities described by VERITY ; 2 : Localities described by C. PROLA, P. PROVERA, T. RACHELI, V. SBORDONI.

New localities described by the author : 3 : Bisenzio Valley ; 4 : Appennines between Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna ; 5 : Mugallo Valley ; 6 : Pratomagno ; 7 : High valley of Casentino.

These collections have been done in different years, from the first days of June to the end of July, period of the generation of the species. A second generation, at the end of August, observed by some authors, has not appeared until today in Tuscany. The specimens collected don't show any special characteristics. But sometimes, due to the influence of the climate and the particularity of the environment, it is possible to find specimens with very large black spots on the underside of the hindwings (Fig. 2).

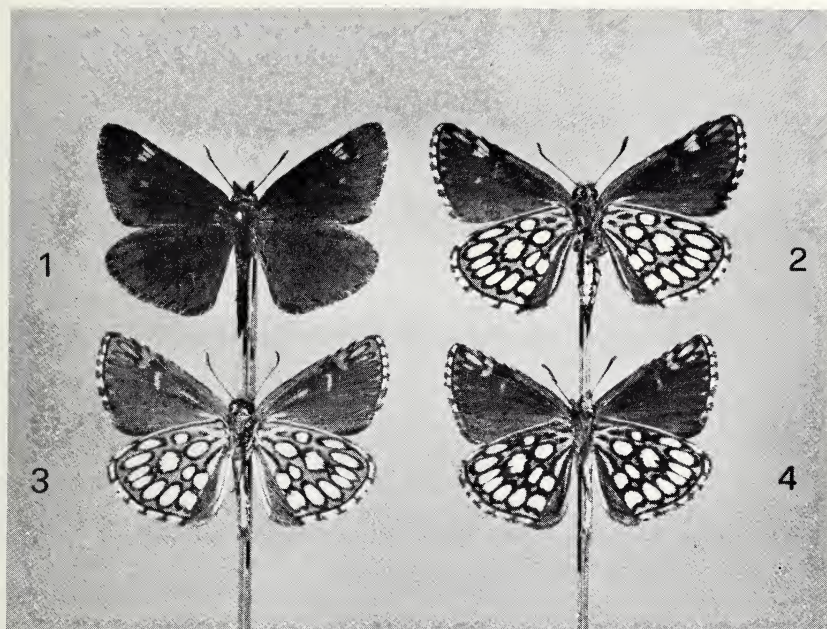


Fig. 2. Enlargement 1 : 1,25.

1 : ♂, Vicchio, Mugello Valley, m. 200, 19/6/76.

2 : ♀, P. so d. Muraglione, Appennines between Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna, m. 950, 18/7/76.

3 : ♂, Giego di Scarperia, Appennines between Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna, m. 890, 4/7/76.

4 : ♂, Pelago, Pratomagno, m. 580, 4/7/81.

Very interesting is the small place where the species lives along the Appennines, with delimitations which haven't any explanation. It is important to pay a particular attention to this species, as its survival could be in danger.

References

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