

REPORT ON THE 2001 FIELD MEETING IN IRELAND: CENTIPEDES AND MILLIPEDES

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INTRODUCTION

The annual BMIG field trip was postponed from the usual Easter slot, due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, and was rescheduled from 10th to 14th October 2001. The trip was based at the Dingle peninsular (North Kerry) in the south-western Ireland. This report is based on the records contributed by K. Alexander, G. Corbet, S. Gregory, J. Harper, J. Lewis, H. Read, P. Richards and D. Scott-Langley.

Historically the Irish centipedes have not been well recorded. Barber and Keay (1988) list just 21 species from Ireland and comment that the majority of records are more than 50 years old. However the last decade has seen an increase in interest. This has resulted in many species being added to the Irish list (e.g. Jones 1992; Cawley 2001a) and a considerable number of new vice-county records for all species. 29 centipede species are currently recorded from Ireland (pers comm A.D.Barber).

The Irish millipedes are relatively better known and 29 species are listed in the preliminary atlas of the British Isles (BMG 1988). As with the centipedes there has been an upturn in interest in the last decade. The review by Doogue et al (1993) included many new species and 38 millipedes are listed in Barber and Jones (1996). Species continue to be added to the Irish list and a considerable number of new vice-county records are reported by Cawley (1997 and 2001b).

RESULTS OF THE FIELD MEETING

Although the majority of collecting was undertaken within North Kerry (H2), records were made from eight Watsonian vice-counties (H2, H4, H5, H6, H8, H9, H12 & H20), within 24 10km national grid squares, across southern and central Ireland. During the field meeting 18 species of centipede (Table 1) and 22 species of millipede (Table 2) were recorded.

Lithobius forficatus and *Necrophloeophagus flavus* were the most commonly encountered centipedes, proving almost ubiquitous. *Brachygeophilus truncorum*, *Lithobius melanops* and *Lithobius variegatus* were also common and found in a wide variety of sites, both inland and on the coast. It was interesting to observe that *L. forficatus* was much more abundant than *L. variegatus*, a characteristically abundant species in western Britain. The only other frequently found centipede was *L. borealis*; again with no preference for disturbed, coastal or inland sites. Not unexpectedly, *Strigamia maritima* was found at several sites on the coast.

The remaining centipedes were only recorded at four sites or less. In the case of *Haplophilus subterraneus*, *Schendyla nemorensis*, *Geophilus insculptus* and *Lithobius microps* this is perhaps unexpected considering the relatively high proportion of Irish records for these species (Barber & Keay 1988). *H. subterraneus*, in particular, is a conspicuous animal and is unlikely to have been over-looked. *Geophilus electricus* was found at one coastal site and *Cryptops parisi* was caught at Fermoy town centre. *Lithobius crassipes* was not seen at all and is perhaps absent from the south of Ireland.

Geophilus carpophagus was only found twice, reinforcing the opinion of Jones (1992) that it may be uncommon in Ireland. Fortunately both species of the newly split *Geophilus carpophagus* aggregate (Arthur *et al.* 2001) were found. Gordon Corbet took two females (55 leg pairs) of the 'long' form (now re-described as the true *Geophilus carpophagus*) on the coast of the Dingle peninsular. Here it was found with the scarce millipede *Choneiulus palmatus*. John Lewis found the 'short' form (the newly described *Geophilus easoni*) in coniferous woodland at Ballinastoe, Co. Wicklow (female; 51 leg pairs). These sites are very much in keeping with the preference for disturbed sites and rural sites, respectively, for these two forms.

Ophiulus pilosus, *Blaniulus guttulatus*, *Cylindroiulus punctatus* and *C. latestriatus* were the most frequently recorded millipedes. The prominence of the latter no doubt reflecting the high proportion of coastal sites sampled. The other three, although found in a wide array of habitats, were by no means ubiquitous.

The elusive *Ophiodesmus albonanus* was widely recorded in coastal locations and (as predicted by Jones 1992) seems to be fairly common in the areas searched. *Choneiulus palmatus* was found at two coastal locations, apparently occupying the same habitat as observed in Fife, Scotland (pers comm G.B. Corbet). *Cylindroiulus londinensis* was also found on the coast at Inch Spit. *Chordeuma proximum* was collected from the edge of a reedbed at Reen Point. Females, probably of this species, were also collected in Lismore city. Synanthropic sites produced scattered records for other apparently rare Irish millipedes, such as *Archiboreoiulus pallidus*, *Boreoiulus tenuis*, *Macrosternodesmus palicola*, *Cylindroiulus britannicus* and *C. caeruleocinctus*.

The forests of Killarney National Park produced the only records for *Glomeris marginata* and *Polyxenus lagurus*. The former was common in the forest, but only one population of *P. lagurus*, under loose bark on an old conifer, was seen. *Nemasoma varicorne* was also found under tree bark in this area.

All species collected at the field meeting have been previously recorded from Ireland, although some have only been recorded on a few occasions in the last decade. Other than the rare and elusive coastal or synanthropic geophilomorphs all the expected centipedes were collected. A few millipedes, such as *Ommatoiulus sabulosus*, *Julus scandinavicus* and the three *Polydesmus* species; *inconstans*, *gallicus* (*coriaceus*) and *denticulatus*, could be expected to be present in areas examined. It is possible that October is not the ideal time to sample for these species. Certainly it was apparent at most sites surveyed that virtually all the *Polydesmus* specimens collected were

immature or sub-adult and could not be reliably determined. None the less, the records make a valuable addition to the knowledge of the Irish fauna.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ADDENDUM

Centipedes :

Geophilus osquidatum: Lay-by near Mal

TABLE 1: RECORDS OF CENTIPEDES FROM THE 2001 IRELAND FIELD MEETING

Location:	7	8	8	24	3	4	18	19	5	9	10	28	13	11	12	14	2	15	16	27	29	26	21	30	25	1	17	23										
Vice-county:	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	5	6	6	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	12	12	20									
10km grid square:	Q 30	Q 30	Q 51	Q 60	Q 60	V 39	V 39	V 39	V 49	V 49	V 49	V 79	V 79	V 98	V 98	W 59	W 89	X 09	X 09	R 44	R 09	R 28	M 00	M 10	M 12	S 73	T 10	T 32										
<i>Brachygeophilus truncorum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+	+																							
<i>Cryptops hortensis</i>						+										+																						
<i>Cryptops parisi</i>																	+																					
<i>Geophilus carpophagus 'short'</i>																																						
<i>Geophilus carpophagus 'long'</i>						+																																
<i>Geophilus electricus</i>									+																													
<i>Geophilus insculptus</i>																																						
<i>Haplophilus subterraneus</i>																																						
<i>Lamyctes fulvicornis</i>																																						
<i>Lithobius borealis</i>																																						
<i>Lithobius forficatus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+				+	+	+	+	+																				
<i>Lithobius melanops</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+																																
<i>Lithobius microps</i>		+				+																																
<i>Lithobius variegatus</i>		+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+																												
<i>Necrophloeophagus flavus</i>					+	+																																
<i>Schendyla nemorensis</i>																																						
<i>Strigamia crassipes</i>																																						
<i>Strigamia maritima</i>	+	+																																				
Location:	7	8	24	3	4	18	19	5	9	10	28	13	11	12	14	2	15	16	27	29	26	21	30	25	1	17	23											

Location details: 1 - MacMurrrough Hostel, S7330, H12; 2 - Fermoy Town, W8198, H5; 3 - Inch Sand Spit, Q6401, H2; 4 - Dunmore Head/Slea Head, V3198, H2; 5 - Eask Tower/An Scoth, Dingle, V4599, H2; 6 - Dingle Town, Q4401, H2; 7 - Ventry Bay, Q3800, H2; 8 - Smerwick Harbour, Q3505, H2; 9 - Trabey Beach, V4898, H2; 10 - Seacrest Hostel, Lispol, V4998, H2; 11 - Kilmie NP - meeting of waters, V9484, H2; 12 - Kilmie NP - Galway Bridge, V9180, H2; 13 - Reen Point, V7698, H2; 14 - River Blackwater, nr Malloy, W5298, H4; 15 - Lismore Cathedral, X0498, H6; 16 - Lismore Castle, X0499, H6; 17 - Carne Beach, T1305 H12; 18 - Dingle way, South Ventry, V3698, H2; 19 - Mount Eagle, V3498, H2; 20 - Creegh Village, R0367, H9; 21 - Poolsallagh, M0802, H9; 22 - Spanish Point, R0278, H9; 23 - Ballinastoe, T3120, H20; 24 - Brandon Point, Dingle, Q5217, H2; 25 - Burren, nr Ailladie/Fanare, M1120, H9; 26 - Inchiquin Lough, Carofin, R2789, H9; 27 - Adare, R4545, H8; 28 - R. Laune, Castlemaine Harbour, V7799, H2; 29 - Cliffs of Moher, R0492, H9; 30 - Cregg, M1409, H9.

TABLE 2: RECORDS OF MILLIPEDES FROM THE 2001 IRELAND FIELD MEETING

For details of locations see Table 1.

	Location:		7	8	6	3	4	5	9	10	13	11	12	14	2	15	16	27	21	20	22	26	31	1	17
	Vice-county:		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	5	6	6	8	9	9	9	9	9	12	12
	10km grid square:		Q	Q	Q	Q	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	W	W	X	X	R	M	R	R	R	R	S	T
			30	30	40	60	39	49	49	49	79	98	98	59	89	09	09	44	00	06	07	28	37	73	10
<i>Archiboreoiulus pallidus</i>												+													
<i>Blaniulus guttulatus</i>			+									+			+			+						+	+
<i>Boreoiulus tenuis</i>																+									
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>						+				+		+								+		+			
<i>Brachyulus pusillus</i>			+																	+					+
<i>Choneiulus palmaris</i>							+																		
<i>Chordeuma proximum</i>										+															
<i>Chordeuma sp. Female</i>																									
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>														+		+									
<i>Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus</i>																+									
<i>Cylindroiulus latestriatus</i>			+	+			+	+	+	+									+		+				+
<i>Cylindroiulus londinensis</i>						+																			
<i>Cylindroiulus punctatus</i>			+				+					+	+	+		+								+	
<i>Glomeris marginata</i>												+	+						+						
<i>Macrostermodesmus palicola</i>													+												
<i>Nanogona polydesmoides</i>						+				+		+		+		+								+	
<i>Nemasoma varicornis</i>												+				+									
<i>Ophiodesmus albonanus</i>			+					+																+	
<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>			+						+			+	+	+		+							+	+	
<i>Polydesmus argustus</i>									+																
<i>Polydesmus lagurus</i>											+														
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>											+	+	+	+		+									
<i>Tachypodoiulus niger</i>												+	+	+		+									
Location:	7	8	6	3	4	5	9	10	13	11	12	14	2	15	16	27	21	20	22	26	31	1	17		