

REPORT ON THE 2001 FIELD MEETING IN IRELAND: WOODLICE

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INTRODUCTION

The annual BMIG field trip was based at the Dingle peninsular (North Kerry) in south-western Ireland. The event 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.

Woodlice have been relatively well recorded in Ireland. Doogue and Harding (1982) provide an Irish distribution atlas listing 28 species considered to be native or naturalised. Recently the known ranges of many Irish woodlice have been increased considerably (e.g. Cawley 2001a) and one species, *Armadillidium depressum*, has been added to the Irish list.

RESULTS OF THE FIELD MEETING

Although the majority of collecting during this field trip was undertaken in North Kerry (H2), records were made from six Watsonian vice-counties (H2, H4, H5, H6, H9 & H12), within 14 10km national grid squares across southern and central Ireland. 18 species of woodlice were recorded (Table 1). Records contributed by K. Alexander, G. Corbet, S. Gregory, J. Harper, H. Read, P. Richards, D. Scott-Langley and I. Wilde.

Oniscus asellus was by far the most abundant species, reflecting the predominance of lime-deficient substrates examined. Many of the *Oniscus asellus* seen, particularly in urban situations, were rather brightly marked and some what reminiscent of *Oniscus asellus* ssp. *occidentalis* (Bilton 1994) that occurs widely in south-west England. Males were collected at most sites so it would be interesting to take a closer look at these one day.

As expected, *Porcellio scaber* and *Trichoniscus pusillus* also proved common and ubiquitous, but *Philoscia muscorum* was typically found in much smaller numbers. Doogue & Harding (1982) have previously noted that this species is less abundant in lime-poor areas. At many sites *P. muscorum* was associated with large numbers of *Porcellionides cingendus*, which may partially replace it in south-western areas. *Ligia oceanica* proved to be numerous on the rocky shoreline of the Dingle peninsular.

Although readily found at the few sites surveyed in the south-east, *Armadillidium vulgare* was rarely found at the many apparently suitable sites examined around the Dingle peninsular in the south-west. *Platyarthrus hoffmannseggi* was even more restricted to the south-east with just two records in county Wexford. This is very much in keeping with the south-eastern Irish distributions for these species described in Doogue & Harding (1982).

Another predominantly south-eastern species is the Irish speciality *Oritoniscus flavus*. A torch light survey at MacMurrough hostel found several specimens under stones in a damp grassy hollow within the adjoining farmyard. There is an old record for this woodlouse on the Dingle peninsular. Paul Harding re-located the site, which appeared suitable habitat, but it was not found. Several specimens of *Porcellio dilatatus*, *Porcellio spinicornis* and *Cylisticus convexus* were also found in the farmyard at MacMurrough. Further specimens of *C. convexus* were later collected from a street in Dingle. These two sites for *C. convexus* are very much in keeping with the preference for synanthropic sites reported in Cawley (2001).

Two frequent Trichoniscids were *Trichoniscus pygmaeus* and *Androniscus dentiger*. Both were found equally in coastal habitats and at inland urban sites. Unfortunately, most of the *Haplophthalmus 'mengei'* specimens collected were female, but the few males collected were all *H. mengei*. These were either on the coast or occupying synanthropic sites inland. Despite careful searching *Haplophthalmus danicus* was only recorded at two sites, both within Lismore city centre. Cawley (2001) reports that it is significantly more widespread in Ireland than previously thought so perhaps we were unlucky. *Trichoniscoides saeroeensis* was collected at a single site, under stones at the edge of an eroding coastal bank.

Several specimens of *Trichoniscoides albidus* were found by Paul Richards under turf in a small churchyard in Killarney Forest. This is apparently very rare in Ireland, but Cawley (2001) suggests it may be under-recorded. This is almost certainly the case and it would be worth searching some of the larger river valleys for this notoriously elusive animal (This field meeting did not find it in the Blackwater). Other species found at this churchyard included *T. pygmaeus*, *A. dentiger*, *H. mengei* and several elusive millipedes. Quite a contrast to the surrounding forest where all but the most ubiquitous woodlice were found.

All species collected at the field meeting have been previously recorded from Ireland, although some have only been recorded on a few occasions. Other than a few rare coastal species, such *Miktoniscus patience* or *Armadillidium album*, all the expected woodlice were collected. The records make a valuable addition to the knowledge of the Irish fauna.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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REFERENCES

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- Cawley, M. (2001) Notes and records on the Irish woodlice (Crustacea: Isopoda) including new sites for *Halophiloscia couchii* (Kinahan). *Bull. Ir. Biogeog. Soc.* **25**: 211-217
- Doogue, D. and Harding, P.T. (1982) *Distribution atlas of woodlice in Ireland*. An Foras Forbartha, Dublin.

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

	7	8	6	3	4	18	19	5	9	10	13	11	12	14	2	15	16	20	22	21	1	17	
Location:																							
Vice-county:	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	5	6	6	9	9	9	12	12	12
10km grid square:	Q	Q	Q	Q	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	W	W	X	X	R	R	M	S	S	T
	30	30	40	60	39	39	39	49	49	49	79	98	98	59	89	09	09	06	07	00	73	10	10
<i>Androniscus deniger</i>			+					+		+			+			+	+				+	+	+
<i>Armadillidium vulgare</i>	+			+												+		+			+	+	+
<i>Cylisticus convexus</i>			+																		+		
<i>Haplophthalmus danicus</i>																+							
<i>Haplophthalmus mengei</i> males													+										
<i>Haplophthalmus 'mengei'</i> s.l.									+					+									
<i>Ligia oceanica</i>		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Omisiscus asellus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Oritoniscus flavus</i>																							
<i>Philoscia muscorum</i>	+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Platyarthus hoffmannseggi</i>																							
<i>Porcellio dilatatus</i>																							
<i>Porcellio scaber</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Porcellio spinicornis</i>			+																				
<i>Porcellionides cingendus</i>	+		+	+				+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Trichoniscoides albidus</i>													+										
<i>Trichoniscoides saeroeensis</i>		+																					
<i>Trichoniscus pusillus</i>	+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Trichoniscus pygmaeus</i>		+		+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Location:	7	8	6	3	4	18	19	5	9	10	13	11	12	14	2	15	16	20	22	21	1	17	

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 Bay, 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, Lispolse, V4998, H2: 11 - Kilmorie NP - meeting of waters, V9484, H2: 12 - Kilmorie NP - Galway Bridge, V9180, H2: 13 - Reen Point, V7698, H2: 14 - River Blackwater/nr Mallow, 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 - Poulsallagh, M0802, H9: 22 - Spanish Point, R0278, H9.