Some insects in the Rangitoto Range, New Zealand

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Abstract

Records are presented of Odonata seen in the Rangitoto Range in January 1981 together with notes on some Ephemeroptera and migrant Australian butterflies. *Quintinia acutifolia* (Escalloniaceae) is listed as a new host for *Aenetus virescens* (Lepidoptera: Hepialidae).

Keywords: Odonata; Ephemeroptera; Lepidoptera; Rangitoto Range, North Island.

In December 1979, Rosemary Cowan, of Rewa Rewa, near Otorohanga wrote to me about dragonflies in the Rangitoto range. She had seen what appeared, from the descriptions given by Winstanley (1979), to be *Antipodochlora braueri* (Selys), and she invited me to visit the area. In January 1981, I took up her invitation and one day (9 January 1981) was spent in the upper catchment of the Waipa River high on the slopes of Rangitoto (NZMS1 N83 922778, 861 m altitude). The vegetation of the area is mainly cutover mixed podocarp/broadleaf forest of topical interest as one habitat of the endangered North Island kokako, *Callaeas cinerea wilsoni* (Bonaparte). Although my interests centred on the Odonata in this area, notes were kept on a few other insects encountered.

Odonata

Uropetala carovei carovei (White) and *Procordulia smithii* (White) were widespread, hawking over the forest roads. Final instar exuviae of *P. smithii* were collected from logs and grasses emerging from a small (approximately 7 × 5 m), logstrewn, shallow humic pond alongside the Waimahora-Owawenga Road (N83 943747, altitude approximately 518 m). Small ponds are typical breeding sites for this species. *P. smithii* adults and the damselflies *Austrolestes colensonis* (White) and *Xanthocnemis zealandica* (McL.) were active over the pond on this hot and sunny day. Adults of *Aeshna brevistyla* Rambur, *Hemicordulia australiae* (Rambur), *P. smithii, A. colensonis,* and *X. zealandica* were taken at another pond, approximately 15 × 20 m, alongside the same road (N83 934745, 518 m). *Hemianax papuensis* (Burm.) was seen over this pond and hawking over the road in one other area (N83 950750, 594 m), but no specimen was taken.

Several larval colonies of *U. c. carovei* were located on the true right bank of the Tunawaea Stream within 50 m upstream of the road (N83 933738, 533 m) and more were found on a steep bank about 50 m south of the stream. Adults of *A. braueri* were seen flying over the Tunawaea Stream and 2 larvae were taken from toetoe leaves (*Cortaderia toetoe* Zotov) trailing in this stream a few metres upstream from the road. Two larvae and 1 final-instar exuviae of *A. braueri* were collected at a small tributary of the Owawenga Stream (N83 933749, 472 m) and 4 adult males were taken over the main stream at this point. Another adult male *A. braueri* was taken over the upper Owawenga Stream (N83 940751, 518 m).

Ephemeroptera

Nymphs of *Ichthybotus* sp. were common in samples from the Owawenga and Tunawaea Streams at the sites mentioned previously. Nymphs of *Oniscigaster* sp. were seen in pools in the Tunawaea Stream but specimens were not taken. Those seen appeared to have a dark bar across the caudal filaments which McLean (1970) recognised as a specific characteristic of *O. wakefieldi* McLachlan.

Lepidoptera

A blue moon butterfly, *Hypolimnas bolina nerina* (Fabricius), was observed flying over the road by Mrs C. H. Winstanley at approximately 1500 h NZST (N83 923766, 838 m). This species has not been recorded previously in January in New Zealand (Gibbs 1980). About 15 minutes later, I saw an Australian painted lady (*Cynthia kershawi* McCoy) near the radio towers (N83 919769, 861 m) about 900 m from the Rangitoto trig.

Unmistakable tunnels of the puriri moth, *Aenetus virescens* (Doubleday), were seen in the trunk of a *Quintinia acutifolia* Kirk (Escalloniaceae) on the eastern side of the Rangitoto summit road (N83 923766, 838 m). This is the first record of *A. virescens* using *Quintinia* sp. as a host (J. R. Grehan, pers. comm.). Another member of the Escalloniaceae, *Carpodetus serratus* J. R. and G. Forst., is a common host species for *A. virescens,* but the puriri moth has not been recorded from *Ixerba brexioides* A. Cunn, the sole representative of the third Escalloniaceae genus found in New Zealand.

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