

New records of Auchenorrhyncha (Hemiptera) from the Maltese Islands

Vera D'URSO^{1*}, David MIFSUD², Giorgio SABELLA¹ & Oscar LISI¹

The faunistic knowledge of the Auchenorrhyncha of the Maltese Islands is still incomplete. Studies on this insect group from the Maltese Islands were mostly neglected and it was only in recent years that some collecting efforts were carried out resulting in a published check-list of 46 species. Since then, a new record for the Maltese Islands was also published.

The Auchenorrhyncha fauna of the nearby island of Sicily is very rich, with some 400 recorded species. However, the Sicilian territory is more than 50 times larger than that of the Maltese Islands and is less affected by anthropogenic pressures. Presence of a wider range of habitat types and as a direct consequence of this the floral biodiversity which can host Auchenorrhyncha is also more diverse. Thus by comparison, it is expected that at least 100 different species of leaf and plant-hoppers could potentially occur in Malta.

In the present communication, results of material collected mainly by Malaise traps and to a lesser extent by sweeping nets will be reported. Among the species collected, 13 are new records for the archipelago, thus bringing the total number of recorded species for the Maltese Islands to 60. This high number of new records is indicative of the fact that more studies on the Auchenorrhyncha fauna of Malta need to be carried out. Particularly, collecting needs to be carried out throughout the year and in different habitat types. Thus a better understanding of the composition of this group of phytophagous insects can only be achieved in this way.

¹ Dipartimento di Scienze Biologiche, Geologiche e Ambientali, Sezione di Biologia Animale 'Marcello La Greca', Università degli Studi di Catania, Via Androne 81, Catania, Italy

² Institute of Earth Systems, Division for Rural Sciences and Food Systems, University of Malta, Msida, Malta

* Corresponding author. E-mail: dursove@unict.it