



ON THE COLEOPTERA, ETC., OF THE FAROE ISLANDS.

BY JAMES J. WALKER, M.A., R.N., F.L.S.

Reprinted from 'The Entomologist's Monthly Magazine,' Vol. lxxiv.

The first part of Volume II of 'The Zoology of the Faroes: edited by Ad. S. Jensen and others' (Andr. Fred. Høst and Søn, Copenhagen: 1928-1937) deals with the Crustacea, Myriopoda and part of the Insecta. The scanty terrestrial fauna of these remote subarctic islands, situated in the most stormy region of the North Atlantic Ocean, presents certain features of considerable interest from the point of view of animal ecology and of geographical distribution; and the detailed accounts of the various groups included in this part, which are presented throughout in excellent English by a highly competent body of specialists, form a valuable contribution to our Zoological knowledge.

The Faroe Islands are intersected by the 62nd parallel of north latitude, and together occupy an area of 511 square miles, being

distant from the nearest land (Unst, Shetland) nearly 200 miles, and rather more than 280 miles from the south coast of Iceland. All the islands are mountainous and attain a considerable elevation, culminating in Slattevatindür (Osteroë), 2,984 feet above sea-level. A certain amount of cultivation is practicable in sheltered situations at low levels, but most of the surface of the islands consists of bleak moorland and pasture, while trees, with the exception of a few of the hardiest kinds carefully protected from the too prevalent gales, are entirely absent. The growth of certain forms of herbaceous vegetation is, however, surprisingly luxuriant in many favourable situations. When their high northern latitude is considered, the climate of the Faroes is mild and equable, severe frosts in winter being almost unknown, but as a rule the weather is humid and boisterous, with frequent fogs and a marked deficiency of sunshine.

Under these conditions of isolation, climate and vegetation, an extensive insect fauna is not to be looked for. Fourteen Orders in all of insects are represented in the Faroes; of these three, the Hymenoptera, Hemiptera and Diptera, remain to be dealt with in a forthcoming part of the 'Zoology.' The 259 species of insects recorded in Part I are distributed among the eleven Orders as follows :—

	Species.
THYSANOPTERA. (<i>Kai L. Henriksen</i>) - -	1
COLLEMBOLA. (" ") - -	13
ORTHOPTERA. (" ") - -	2
THYSANOPTERA. (<i>J. Maltback</i>) - -	1
COPEOGNATHA. (<i>Kai L. Henriksen</i>) - -	1
MALLOPHAGA. (" ") - -	31
ANOPLURA. (" ") - -	2
PLANIPENNIA. (" ") - -	1
TRICHOPTERA. (" ") - -	17
LEPIDOPTERA. (<i>Niels L. Wolff</i>) - -	32
COLEOPTERA. (<i>August West</i>) - -	156
SIPHONAPTERA. (<i>Kai L. Henriksen</i>) - -	2

No species peculiar to the Faroes are comprised in this list, but some remarkable endemic variations, especially in the Lepidoptera, are met with in the insect fauna of the Islands. Thus the majority of the males of the abundant Ghost Moth, *Hepialus humuli* Linn., as shown by a fine series in the Oxford University Museum collected on Borö by Mr. N. Annandale in 1890, are curiously intermediate in colour and marking between the well-known variety

hethlandica Weir from Shetland and the ordinary white form which is also present. Other conspicuous departures from the normal are found in the Faroese forms of certain Geometrid moths, as in *Cidaria munitata* Hübn., *C. designata* Hufn. (subsp. *faroensis* Wolff), *Eupithecia satyrata curzoni* Gregs. (ab. *trifasciata* Wolff.), *E. nanata* Hübn. (subsp. *zebrata* Wolff), etc. There are almost certainly no resident butterflies in the Faroes, but those well-known migrants *Vanessa cardui* and *V. atalanta*, whose wanderings extend even at times to Iceland, have been observed on several occasions. Some species of insects, as in Iceland, occur in great profusion; as an instance Wolff writes thus of *Cidaria (Emmlesia) albulata* Schiff. : 'Thousands of this Lepidopteron swarm on cloudy warm days, standing like clouds of dust over the grass fields.' The common earwig *Forficula auricularia* Linn. is abundant, though it appears not yet to have extended its range to Iceland; and the immense swarms of our familiar 'daddy-long-legs,' which appear in late summer, have been noted by more than one non-entomological visitor to the Islands.

The first list of Faroese Coleoptera of any importance was published in 1881 by Dr. H. J. Hansen (1), and included the names of sixty-five species of the Order. In 1890 the Rev. F. A. Walker (2) recorded eleven species taken on flying visits to the islands in the previous year, and in 1900 Dr. D. Sharp (3), who appears not then to have been aware of Hansen's paper, published in this Magazine a list of twenty-nine species of beetles, collected near Thors-havn, the principal town of the Faroes, by Mr. N. Annandale in June of that year. In our following volume Dr. O. M. Reuter (4) draws attention to Hansen's list, and adds the species not enumerated by Dr. Sharp, thus bringing the total number of Faroese Coleoptera then known to seventy-four or seventy-five species. The results of another small collection made by Dr. Annandale in August, 1903, comprising twenty-three species, four of which were new to the island fauna, are given by Dr. Sharp (5) in our volume for that year. I. C. Nielsen (6) in 1908 adds thirteen species from the collections of Warming and Hansen, B. Poppius (7) records in 1909 twenty-eight species collected by W. Klinckowstroem, and K. Holdhaus (8) forty-four species collected by Dr. R. Görgei and Dr. F. Cornu in 1911. Lastly, E. Mjöberg (9) gives a valuable list of seventy-nine species collected by Klinckowstroem in 1915, thus making a total of 117 species of Coleoptera recorded up to the date of his paper from the Faroe Islands.

The masterly treatise by Dr. August West (10) on the Faroese

Coleoptera, as known up to the year 1930, gives ample details of the occurrence and distribution in the islands of 156 species, all of which are found in the British Islands, and are referred to twenty-three families as follows:—

Carabidae	-	-	26 spp.	Dermestidae	-	-	3 spp.
Halplidae	-	-	1 „	Byrrhidae	-	-	3 „
Dytiscidae	-	-	7 „	Elateridae	-	-	1 „
Staphylinidae	-	-	65 „	Helodidae	-	-	1 „
Scydmaenidae	-	-	1 „	Cantharidae	-	-	1 „
Silphidae	-	-	3 „	Anobiidae	-	-	3 „
Ptiliidae	-	-	1 „	Ptinidae	-	-	3 „
Scarabaeidae	-	-	3 „	Tenebrionidae	-	-	1 „
Hydrophilidae	-	-	8 „	Cerambycidae	-	-	2 „
Cryptophagidae	-	-	8 „	Chrysomelidae	-	-	1 „
Lathridiidae	-	-	1 „	Curculionidae	-	-	12 „
Coccinellidae	-	-	1 „				

It will be interesting to compare this total with the number of species recorded up to the same date from the two nearest regions, viz. the Shetland Islands (232 species) and Iceland (141 species).

The families of Coleoptera which are represented by the greatest number of species are the Carabidae, Dytiscidae, Staphylinidae, Hydrophilidae and Curculionidae, and as many as twenty-one species of the genus *Atheta* have been recorded from the Faroes. Some of these, as is the case with the Lepidoptera, are met with in unexpected numbers, and some, *Nebria gyllenhali*, for instance, range from sea-level to the highest mountain summits. Among the most abundant and characteristic beetles of the islands are *Nebria iberica* Oliv. (its near ally *N. brevicollis* Fab. does not appear to occur in the Faroes), *N. gyllenhali* Schön., *Notiophilus biguttatus* Fab., *Trechus obtusus* Er., *Patrobus septentrionis* Dej., *P. assimilis* Chaud., *Calathus fuscipes* Goeze, *C. melanocephalus* var. *nubigena* Hal., *Hydroporus pubescens* Gyll., *Agabus solieri* Aubé, *Tachinus rufipes* De Geer, *Aphodius lapponum* Gyll., *Cercyon haemorrhoidalis* Fab., *Cryptohypnus riparius* Fab., *Chrysomela staphylea* Linn. and *Otiorrhynchus arcticus* Ol. Certain familiar beetles which follow mankind everywhere have in due course made their way to the Faroes, but the two recorded Longicorns, *Callidium violaceum* Linn. and *Gracilia minuta* Fab., and the weevil *Pissodes pini* Linn. are obviously accidental importations.

In July of last year Messrs. H. G. Vevers and F. C. Evans visited Myggenaes, the western outlier of the Faroes (lat. 62° 0' N., long. 6° 30' W.), for the purpose of studying the remarkable avi-

fauna of this remote and little-known island. These gentlemen made a small collection of sixty-eight specimens of Coleoptera referable to fourteen species, which is deposited in the Entomological Department of the Oxford University Museum, and is of special interest, as very few insects have as yet been recorded from Myggenaes. The species, most of which were found under small stones and in and about the burrows of puffins, are as follows:—

Notiophilus biguttatus Fab. (1), *Nebria iberica* Oliv. (1), *N. gyllenhali* Schön. (22), *Loricera pilicornis* Fab. (4), *Amara aulica* Panz. (2), *Calathus melanocephalus* var. *nubigena* Hal. (3), *Trechus obtusus* Er. (2), *Patrobus** (12 specimens which have been critically examined by Dr. K. G. Blair, who refers them all to *septentrionis* Dej.), *Megasternum boletophagum* (1), *Tachinus rufipes* De Geer (5), *Lesteva sharpi* Rye (1), *Choleva watsoni* Spence (3), *Otiorynchus arcticus* Ol. (7) and *O. dubius* Stroem (1). Of these, *Choleva watsoni* is not included in Dr. West's list, and is therefore presumably new to the Faroese fauna.

The late Dr. D. Sharp, in the pages of our Magazine (Vol. XXXIX, p. 250), concludes his second paper on the Coleoptera of the Faroe Islands with the following remarks: 'I shall not be surprised if the number of species actually in the islands will ultimately prove to be as many as two hundred. A resident naturalist who can take advantage of good weather at different seasons is essential to the acquisition of complete knowledge on this point.'

REFERENCES.

- (1) 1881. HANSEN, H. J. Faunula Insectorum Faeroeensis. Nat. Tidsskr. (3) XIII, pp. 229—250.
- (2) 1890. WALKER, F. A. List of Insects taken in the Faroe and Westmann Islands and in Iceland, 1890. Entomologist, Vol. XXIII, pp. 374, 376.
- (3) 1900. SHARP, D. Coleoptera from Iceland and the Faroë Islands collected by N. Annandale, Esq., in 1900. Ent. Mon. Mag., Vol. XXXVI, pp. 253—255.
- (4) 1901. REUTER, O. M. On the Coleoptera of the Faroë Islands. Ent. Mon. Mag., Vol. XXXIX, pp. 3—4.
- (5) 1903. SHARP, D. On some Coleoptera from the Faroë Islands. Ent. Mon. Mag., Vol. XXXVII, pp. 249—250.
- (6) 1908. NIELSEN, I. C. The Insect Fauna of the Faeröes. Kjobenhavn, Botany of the Faeröes, 3, 1908 (1066—1070).
- (7) 1911. HOLDHAUS, K. Zur Kenntniss der Coleopteren-Fauna der Faröer. D. ent. Nationalbibl. Berlin, 2, 1911 (123—125).

* On this genus Dr. Sharp (5, p. 250) remarks as follows—'We do not know enough of the (Faroese) fauna as yet to enable us to deal with the question of variation and other matters of biological interest. It will however be of considerable interest to examine the question of flightlessness. From this point of view the *Patrobi* will be of special interest, as in this genus the wings are in different stages of atrophy according to the species. Do these insects correspond in the extent of this atrophy with the same species on the mainland?'

- (8) 1913. POPPIUS, B. Coleoptera in KLINCKOWSTRÖM, A. v. Über die Insekten- u. Spinnenfauna Islands und der Faeröer (Arkiv för Zoologi, Band 8, No. 12, pp. 7—12). Uppsala.
- (9) 1916—17. MjöBERG, E. Der Käferfauna der Färöer. (Arkiv för Zoologi, Band 10, No. 27, pp. 4—20. Uppsala.
- (10) 1930. WEST, AUGUST. The Zoology of the Faroes. Vol. II, Part 1. XL. Coleoptera, pp. 1—92. Copenhagen, 1928—1937.

Aorangi, Lonsdale Road,
Summertown, Oxford.

March 16th, 1938.

