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FIRST RECORD OF *DELEPROCTOPHYLLA AUSTRALIS* (FABRICIUS, 1787)
(INSECTA: NEUROPTERA: ASCALAPHIDAE) IN ALBANIA

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ABSTRACT

The owlfly species, *Deleproctophylla australis* (Fabricius) has been recorded for the first time in Albania. The species is Pontomediterranean – Balkan element expanding westwards. Some details concerning the morphology and habitat of the species are provided.

Key words: Neuroptera, *Deleproctophylla*, new record, Albania

PRIMA SEGNALAZIONE DI *DELEPROCTOPHYLLA AUSTRALIS* (FABRICIUS, 1787)
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SINTESI

La presenza di una specie di neurotteri ascalafidi, *Deleproctophylla australis* (Fabricius), viene segnalata per la prima volta per il territorio albanese. Si tratta di un elemento Ponto-Mediterraneo – Balcanico, in espansione verso occidente. L'articolo riporta alcuni dettagli morfologici della specie, nonché le caratteristiche dell'habitat.

Parole chiave: Neuroptera, *Deleproctophylla*, prima segnalazione, Albania

INTRODUCTION

Because of their large size, owlflies (Ascalaphidae) are one of the most attractive representatives of Neuroptera. The owlfly family comprises less than five hundred species, with the centres of distribution mainly in the tropics and subtropics.

In Europe there are 17 species, with 5 species in 3 genera occurring on the Balkan Peninsula (Aspöck *et al.*, 2001; Pantaleoni *et al.*, 2011). In his review summarising information on the owlflies of the Balkan Peninsula, Popov (2004) presented the distribution of the species without citation of some relevant previously published references (besides short reports, the following papers devoted to owlflies are missing; Devetak, 1998; Devetak *et al.*, 2002).

The ascalaphid fauna of Albania was, until recently, poorly mapped, and only sporadic information on species occurrence in the country existed (Pongrácz, 1923; Capra, 1945; Zelený, 1964; Popov, 2004). Popov (2004) listed for Albania the following three species: *Libelloides lacteus* (Brullé, 1832) (syn.: *L. ottomanus* /Germar, 1839/), *L. macaronius* (Scopoli, 1763) and *L. rhomboideus* (Schneider, 1845). In July 2012, zoologists from the University of Maribor (Slovenia) collected lacewings in southern Albania; here we report observations of *Deleproctophylla australis* in the mountainous region of the country during the course of this fieldwork.

D. australis is a medium-sized owlfly, clearly separated from the other two European species of the genus by a yellow-brown spot near the pterostigma on the forewings (Van der Weele, 1908; Aspöck *et al.*, 1980). The species is zoogeographically characterised as a Ponto-Mediterranean – Balkan element expanding westwards (Popov & Letardi, 2010).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Owlflies were collected using a sweep net. The captured individuals were preserved in alcohol and deposited in the first author's collection. Insects were photographed under a Nikon SMZ800 stereoscopic zoom microscope with a mounted Nikon DS-Fi1 digital camera and processed using NIS-Elements F 3.0 software. Digital images captured on different focal planes were assembled using the Helicon Focus 4.62 Lite application.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ascalaphidae Rambur, 1842

Deleproctophylla australis (Fabricius, 1787)

Material examined:

Albania: between Berat and Këlcyra: Qafa e Gllavës, 850-902 m above sea level, N 40° 32.35' E 20° 0.19';

18. VII. 2012; 1♂, 1♀, F. Janžekovič leg. The head, thorax, wings and the tip of the abdomen of the male are shown in Figures 1-4. The female was observed to have one phyllum. In the male, the tip of the abdomen with ectoprocts is of a very characteristic form (Fig. 2). On the distal part of each ectoproct there is a short, medially-oriented process.

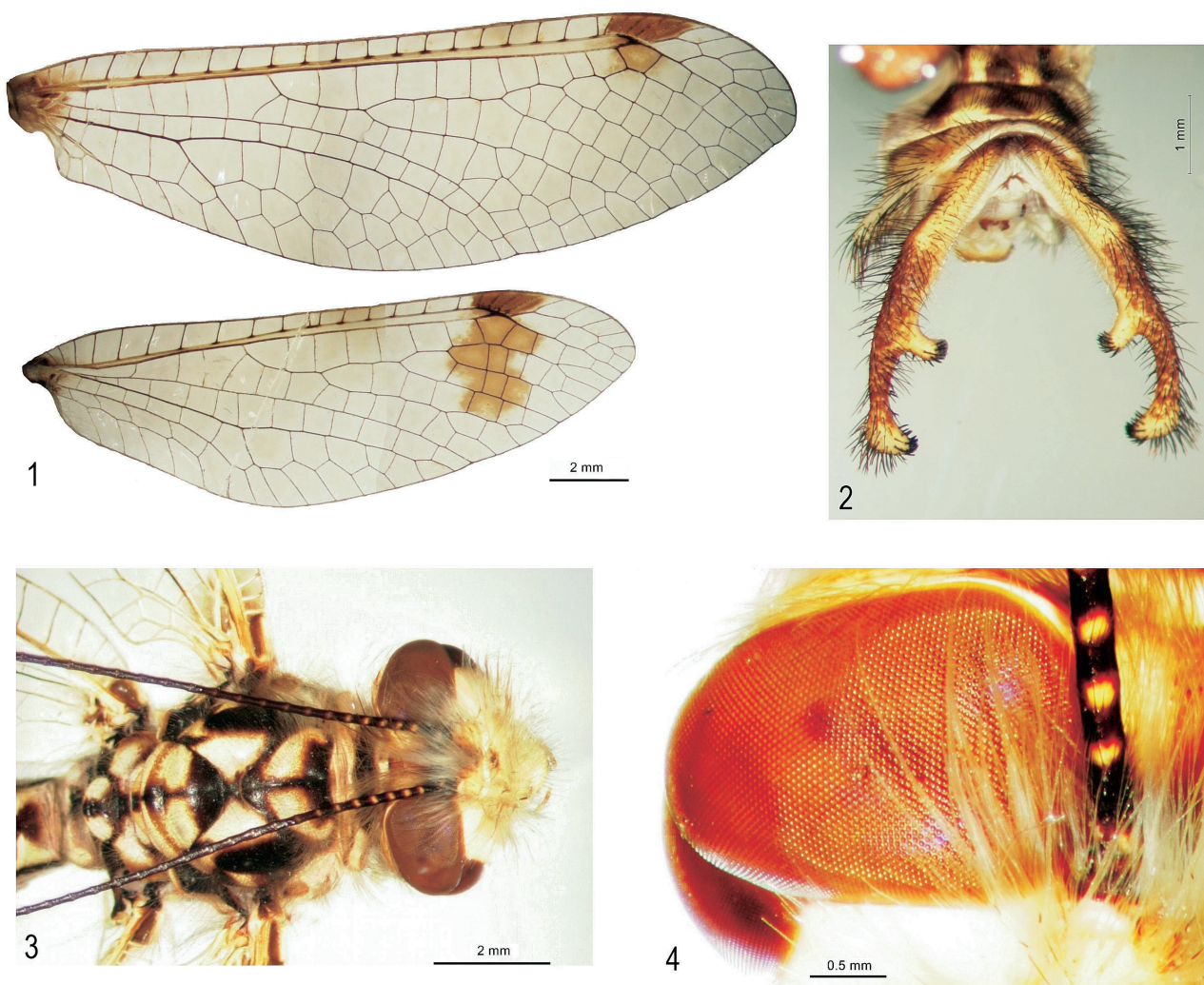
Habitat: The owlflies were found in dry meadows with sporadic trees and bushes of *Quercus*, *Juniperus* and *Spartium*. The pasturing of goats was noted in the vicinity of the meadows.

In this paper, the occurrence in Albania of the genus *Deleproctophylla* is described for the first time. Like the three owlfly species recorded in the country previously (Popov, 2004), *D. australis* seems to also be common in other Mediterranean countries bordering Albania (Aspöck *et al.*, 2001).

Whilst the habitats of *D. australis* occurring in north-western parts of the Balkans (in Istria and Dalmatia) are characteristically rocky (Devetak, 1995), the habitat in Albania – meadows in Qafa e Gllavës – was devoid of rocks. This Albanian habitat (meadows devoid of rocks) provides the same ecological circumstances as that in Southern Italy and other locations in the Balkans (continental Greece in particular) in which this species has been reported (R. A. Pantaleoni, *pers. comm.*). The female collected in Albania possessed phyla similar to those of the fertilized females in other parts of the Balkan Peninsula (Devetak, 1995).

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Figs. 1-4: *Deleproctophylla australis*, a male. 1 – wings; 2 – tip of the abdomen with ectoprocts; 3 – head and thorax; 4 – right compound eye.

Sl. 1-4: Samec vrste *Deleproctophylla australis*. 1 – krila; 2 – konec zadka z ektoprokti; 3 – glava in oprsje; 4 – desno sestavljeno oko.

PRVA NAJDBA VRSTE *DELEPROCTOPHYLLA AUSTRALIS* (FABRICIUS, 1787) (INSECTA: NEUROPTERA: ASCALAPHIDAE) V ALBANIJI

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POVZETEK

Prvič je za Albanijo zabeleženo pojavljanje vrste metuljčnic *Deleproctophylla australis* (Fabricius), ki predstavljajo pontomediteranski balkanski element s težnjo po širjenju na zahod. V prispevku podajamo slike kril, trupa, fasetnih oči in genitalnih segmentov samca ter opis habitata z juga Albanije. Živali smo nabrali na suhih travnikih, ob katerih pasejo koze. Vrsta se od drugih dveh evropskih vrst rodu *Deleproctophylla* razlikuje po temni lisi ob pterostigmi v sprednjih krilih. Za preiskanega samca so značilni parni ektoprokti, ki imajo v distalni polovici kratek izrastek, obrnjen medialno.

Ključne besede: Neuroptera, *Deleproctophylla*, nova najdba, Albanija

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