TWO SPECIES OF SCUTTLE FLY
(DIPTERA: PHORIDAE) NEW TO BRITISH LIST

By R. H. L. Disney*

Continuing revision of the British species of *Megaselia* Rondani has revealed two further additions to the British List as well as clarification of some synonyms proposed by Robinson (1981). The details are given below.

*Megaselia brevior* (Schmitz, 1924)

Between 9 and 14 July 1978 I collected a series of this species from the garden of Juniper Hall Field Centre, Surrey, (Grid ref. 51/1752). They were provisionally assigned to *M. berndseni* (Schmitz) with a question mark. Subsequently this species was re-evaluated and *M. pygmaeoides* (Lundbeck) synonymised with it (Disney, 1985). Following this it became evident that the Juniper Hall specimens belong to *M. brevior*, a species previously known from Austria, Germany, Spain and the Azores.

*M. brevior* males differ from *M. berndseni* by having the terminal hairs of the proctiger only as strong as the hairs of the cerci; in having only a few short, almost colourless spines on the lower faces of the labella; and having shorter costal cilia and bristles on the axillary ridge of the wing. I have compared my specimens with some from the Schmitz collection.

*Megaselia ciliata* (Zetterstedt, 1848)

= *M. confulgens* Borgmeier, 1964. 9. Misidentifcation

Robinson (1981) synonymised *M. confulgens* Borgmeier with *M. aequalis* (Wood), along with *M. nasoni* (Malloch). However, *M. aequalis* and *M. nasoni* are distinct species. The former has a normal fourth abdominal tergite in the female, whereas this tergite is abbreviated in the females of *M. aequalis* (as in *M. ciliata*). In both sexes these two species can be separated by leg colour. In *M. aequalis* both the middle and hind legs are entirely dark brown. In *M. nasoni* the middle legs are yellow brown. The larval habits also differ. Those of *M. aequalis* feed on slug eggs (Robinson and Foote, 1968) and those of *M. nasoni* on spider eggs (Disney and Evans, 1980). I formally rescue *M. nasoni* from synonymy.

Borgmeier’s (1964) description of *M. confulgens* “Beyer in litt” was based on the examination of a single female paratype, whose description (despite supposed differences in haltere colour and degree of shine on the frons) lies well within the range of variation for *M. ciliata*. The male of *M. confulgens* (whose description by Borgmeier was based on “Beyer in litt”) is, in my opinion, correctly synonymised with *M. aequalis* by Robinson (1981).

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Megaselia devia Schmitz, 1936

I have three males of this species from England. Two were collected by Mr. G. Forrester from a copse in the New Forest (Grid ref. 41/399009) 26 June - 3 July 1984. I collected a single specimen in my garden in Cambridge (Grid ref. 52/451602) 13-14 September 1984. The species is previously known from Holland and Spain.

The male of M. devia resembles M. discreta (Wood), M. halterata (Wood), M. subfuscipes Schmitz and M. hirtcaudata (Wood) in having bristles on the epandrium. It is immediately distinguished by its vestigial posterior processes of the hypandrium.

Megaselia limburgensis (Schmitz, 1918)

Robinson (1981) synonymised this species with M. fungivora (Wood) on the basis of the specimens attributed to M. limburgensis by Borgmeier (1964), However I have specimens of M. limburgensis from Poland and England which agree with Schmitz’s description and are clearly a different species from M. fungivora. Borgmeier’s description of M. limburgensis lies within the range of variation of M. fungivora. Robinson (1981) correctly recognised that the specimens examined by Borgmeier were in fact M. fungivora, but he incorrectly proposed a synonymy rather than a misidentification. In view of this I formally rescue M. limburgensis from synonymy and recognise it as a valid species.

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References


