

Mesapamea secalella Remm, 1983, new for the Maltese Islands (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae)

J. Agius & O. Pekarsky

Abstract

Both the genus *Mesapamea* Heinicke, 1959 and *Mesapamea secalella* Remm, 1983 are recorded for the first time from the Maltese Islands. The tribe Apameini Guenée, 1841 is being recorded for the second time. Notes on the distribution, habitats and larval host plants are included. A Maltese name is proposed for this new record.

KEY WORDS: Lepidoptera, Noctuidae, *Mesapamea secalella*, new record, Apameini, Malta.

Mesapamea secalella Remm, 1983, nuevo para Malta
(Lepidoptera: Noctuidae)

Resumen

El género *Mesapamea* Heinicke, 1959 y también *Mesapamea secalella* Remm, 1983 se citan por la primera vez para Malta. La tribu Apameini Guenée de 1841 se citó por segunda vez. Se incluyen datos sobre su distribución, hábitat y la planta nutricia de la larva. Se propone un nombre maltés para esta nueva cita.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Lepidoptera, Noctuidae, *Mesapamea secalella*, nueva cita, Apameini, Malta.

Introduction

The Noctuidae is the largest of the Lepidoptera families with approximately 35,000 known species worldwide. In Europe, the family comprises about 1,450 species so far (FIBIGER & LAFONTAINE, 2004) 159 species of which, including this new species, are known from the Maltese Islands. In Europe, the genus *Mesapamea* is represented by four species.

Material

MALTA: 1 ♀, Dwejra (Bingemma), limits of Mgarr 25-VIII-2011 coll J. Agius & O. Pekarsky.

Both the genus and the species are new to the lepidopterofauna of the Maltese Islands. I propose the Maltese name “Mesapameja ta’ Remm” for the author who separated this species from the superficially identical *Mesapamea secalis* (Linnaeus, 1758).

Distribution

Widespread throughout Europe including Sicily, as far east as the Urals and occurring in Turkey and the Caucasus region.

Bionomics and habitat

The moths are univoltine and occur in several kinds of habitats, from open woods to mountain steppes in a wide altitudinal range. In Malta, this species was recorded in a woodland area which is rich in *Pinus halepensis* (Aleppo pine) trees and vast open patches with a variety of grasses at an altitude of around 210 meters. The food plant in Malta has not yet been identified but within its distribution, the larvae are known to be polyphagous on several grasses.

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Figs. 1-2.— 1 Adult female *Mesapamea secalella* Remm, 1983 2. Female genitalia of *Mesapamea secalella* Remm, 1983.