

Stemmatophora combustalis (Fischer von Röslerstamm, 1842) new to the Maltese Islands (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae)

J. Agius & J. Formosa

Abstract

Stemmatophora combustalis (Fischer von Röslerstamm, 1842) is reported for the first time from the Maltese Islands. Distribution and habits of the adult and larvae are included. A Maltese name is proposed for this new record.

KEY WORDS: Lepidoptera, Pyralidae, *Stemmatophora combustalis*, Malta.

Stemmatophora combustalis (Fischer von Röslerstamm, 1842) nueva para Malta
(Lepidoptera: Pyralidae)

Resumen

Stemmatophora combustalis (Fischer von Röslerstamm, 1842) se menciona por primera vez para Malta. Se incluye la distribución y hábitat del adulto y de la larva. Se propone un nombre maltés para este nuevo registro.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Lepidoptera, Pyralidae, *Stemmatophora combustalis*, Malta.

Introduction

The superfamily Pyraloidea is composed of about 16,000 described species worldwide (HEPPNER, 1991) with 914 species recorded from Europe (NUSS *et al.*, 2004). On the Maltese Islands around 141 Pyraloidea species have been recorded so far with the latest addition being *Cydalima perspectalis* (Walker, 1859) (AGIUS, 2018).

The genus *Stemmatophora* Guenée, 1854 which is distributed in Europe, Africa and the Middle East is very often synonymised with the genus *Actenia* Guenée, 1854 and the genus *Scotomerodes* Ragonot, 1895. In SLAMKA (2006), all the three genera have been used however for the purpose of this paper, the genus *Stemmatophora* Guenée, 1854 has been selected based on the website (http://www.lepiforum.de/lepiwiki.pl?Pyralidae_Europa). Altogether there are 10 species in the genus *Stemmatophora* Guenée, 1854 in Europe and only *Stemmatophora brunnealis* (Treitschke, 1829) has so far been recorded for the Maltese Islands (SAMMUT, 2000). Normally *Stemmatophora* species are characterised by bipectinate or ciliate antennae of the male and filiform antennae of the female.

Material

MALTA, 1 ♂, Fomm ir-Rih, 20-VI-2019, leg. J. Formosa.

Discussion

Stemmatophora combustalis (Fischer von Röslerstamm, 1842) is distributed in South Europe from Portugal, South of France to Turkey including the neighbouring island of Sicily. The species inhabits dry open habitats. The larvae are detritophagus, that is they feed on dead or wilted leaves and flowers in silken tubes of *Helianthemum* sp., *Thymus* sp. and *Genista scorpius* (L.) DC (SLAMKA, 2006). In Malta, *Thymus capitata* (L.) Hoffmanns. & Link is a common species found in rocky places and garigue whilst *Helianthemum thymifolium* (L.) Webb and *Helianthemum arabica* (L.) Spach are frequent species found in garigue and rocky sites as well (WEBER, 2006). However so far there is no evidence that *Stemmatophora combustalis* (Fischer von Röslerstamm, 1842) is breeding in the Maltese Islands.

The species is new to the Maltese lepidopterofauna. The authors propose the Maltese name *Stemmatofora mahruqa*, after a transliteration of the scientific name.

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Fig. 1.– *Stemmatophora combustalis* (Fischer von Röslerstamm, 1842).

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