

Short communication

First records of *Gonocerus juniperi* Herrich-Schäffer, 1839 (Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Coreidae) for Albania and its new host plant

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Abstract. The first records of *Gonocerus juniperi* Herrich-Schäffer, 1839 (Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Coreidae: Coreinae: Gonocerini) for Albania are reported. Additional information on the distribution of the species and the genus *Gonocerus* Berthold, 1827 is given. A new host plant is reported.

Key words: true bugs, Coreoidea, Coreinae, distribution, new records, *Juniperus oxycedrus*, Europe, Mediterranean Region, Albania.

Introduction

Three species of the genus *Gonocerus* Berthold, 1827 (Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Coreidae: Coreinae: Gonocerini) are present in Europe and the Mediterranean Region: *Gonocerus acuteangulatus* (Goeze, 1778), *Gonocerus insidiator* (Fabricius, 1787) and *Gonocerus juniperi* Herrich-Schäffer, 1839. So far, only *G. acuteangulatus* and *G. insidiator* have been recorded in Albania (van der Heyden 2017; Halimi et al. 2018; Aukema 2024).

Herein, the presence of *G. juniperi* in Albania is reported for the first time in 2020 near Tirana, contributed to a Facebook Group (Mediterranean Love Albania) by I. Nanaj and with eight observations made by the second author (T. Dhellemmes) between 24.09.2021 and 03.10.2021 in the counties of Elbasan, Korçë, Tirana and Vlorë. The observations were uploaded as photographic records to the online database iNaturalist (2024).

Material

ALBANIA: Tirana County: 41.211368, 19.56114, Mount Dajti, 22.05.2020, 1 adult, on *Juniperus oxycedrus* L., phot. I. Nanaj; 41.2336053114, 19.9649449784, 24.09.2021, 1 adult, phot. Théalie Dhellemmes; Vlorë County: 40.5646654688, 19.3858279295, 25.09.2021, 1 adult, phot. Théalie Dhellemmes; Korçë County: 40.2249666868, 20.6587399209, 01.10.2021, 1 adult, phot. Théalie Dhellemmes; 40.2249316667, 20.6587083333, 01.10.2021, 1 adult, phot. Théalie Dhellemmes (Fig. 1); 40.26206, 20.5931883333, 01.10.2021, 1 adult, phot. Théalie Dhellemmes; 40.2615833333, 20.5937366667, 01.10.2021, 1 nymph, phot. Théalie Dhellemmes (Fig. 2); Elbasan County: 41.1466866667, 20.3799633333, 03.10.2021, 1 adult, phot.

Théalie Dhellemmes; 41.1928070382, 19.9979007548, 1 adult, 03.10.2021, phot. Théalie Dhellemmes.



Fig. 1. Adult specimen of *Gonocerus juniperi* Herrich-Schäffer, 1839, Korçë County, Albania (photo: Théalie Dhellemmes).



Fig. 2. Nymph of *Gonocerus juniperi* Herrich-Schäffer, 1839, Korçë County, Albania (photo: Théalie Dhellemmes).

Discussion

Gonocerus juniperi has a holo-Mediterranean distribution that extends to middle Asia. In Europe, it was recorded in Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece (including Crete), Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia (ST: Caucasus), Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine. The species is also distributed in North Africa (Algeria, Canary Islands, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia), and Asia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Syria, Tadjikistan, Türkiye) (Aukema 2024).

Moulet (1995) listed several species of the family Cupressaceae as host plants for *G. juniperi*: *Chamaecyparis lawsonia* (A. Murray) Parl., *Cupressus sempervirens* L., *Juniperus communis* L., *Juniperus excelsa* M. Bieb., *Juniperus phoenicea* L., *Juniperus sabina* L., *Juniperus thurifera* L., *Thuja occidentalis* L. However, other plants can also attract this species, such as *Picea abies* (L.) H. Karst, *Pinus halepensis* Mill., *Pinus sylvestris* L. (Pinaceae) and *Quercus* sp. (Fagaceae).

Juniperus oxycedrus L. is a new host plant for *G. juniperi*. The prickly juniper, prickly cedar or sharp cedar is native across the Mediterranean coasts, growing on various rocky sites from sea level (Boratyński et al. 2014).

The specimen of *G. juniperi* reported from Mount Dajti was photographed in May, and therefore, it is sug-

gested an individual that has overwintered. The other eight specimens, however, were all found in September and October. They are seven adults and a nymph which have ended their only summer generation when the juniper berries have ripened and specimens of *G. juniperi* are preparing to overwinter. In fact, according to Stehlík (1988), the species is univoltine; the adults hibernate in conifer cones or twigs, then reappear at the beginning of spring and are encountered until the end of autumn.

Conclusions

With the records reported in this note, the number of species of the genus *Gonocerus* present in Albania has risen to three.

Juniperus oxycedrus is a new host plant for *G. juniperi*.

Taking the known distribution of *G. juniperi* and its host plants in Albania and neighbouring countries into account, it is very likely that the species is present in other parts of Albania, too.

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