

REPORT ON THE AUTUMN MEETING IN THE OBAN AREA, 2007: CHILOPODA

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Organised by Glyn and Dawn Collis, the Group met at Bragleenbeg House, Bragleenmore near Oban, Scotland during the period 29th September to 5th October. A total of 13 species of centipede were recorded (Table 2) from 20 sites from a total of 9 10km National Grid squares in the 100km square NM (Table 1). These included collections from both the mainland and from Seil Island, Isle of Mull and Lismore Island. Many of the collections involved areas either close to or actually on the shore line and in addition ornamental gardens were visited as well as various rural and urban locations but despite the diversity of habitats sampled the total number of species recorded was, in some ways, disappointingly low compared with the records for millipedes.

Specimens were collected locally at Bragleenmore and Scammadale, at Ballahuan NR and adjacent areas, Cuan Ferry and Ellenbeich on Seil Island, Craignure, Torosay (Including Torosay Gardens) on Mull, woodland at Moss of Achnacree, Ledaig, Banderloch, Tralee, Ardmaddy Gardens, Appin Port, Lismore Island, the Dunollie/Dunstaffnage/Connel area north of Oban, Fearnach Bay and various sites in the town of Oban (Table 1). Those involved were Glyn Collis, Steve Gregory, Richard Price, Peter Nicholson, and the present author also Gordon Corbet for part of the week.

Table 1: List of sites surveyed

Code	Locality	10km Grid	Code	Locality	10km Grid
1	Bragleenbeg	NM92	11	Ardmaddy Gardens	NM71
2	Ballahuan (Seil Is.)	NM71	12	Appin	NM94
3	Cuan Ferry	NM71	12	Lismore Island	NM84
4	Ellenbeich (Seil Is.)	NM71	14	Dunollie Castle	NM83
5	Craignure (Mull)	NM73	15	Dunstaffg Castle	NM83
6	Torosay (Mull)	NM73	16	Connel L.Linnhe	NM93
7	Moss of Achnacree	NM93	17	Fearnach Bay	NM81
8	Ledaig	NM93	18	Oban Town	NM83
9	Banderloch	NM93	19	Oban Town	NM82
10	Tralee	NM83	20	Scammadale	NM82

The visit to Seil Island was rather disappointing in terms of the Ballahuan nature reserve which yielded only four species. However sampling in the shingle at Cuan Ferry created more interest, yielding not only numbers of *Strigamia maritima* but also the millipede *Thalassiosobates littoralis* and some paler geophilomorphs that proved, on later inspection to include the species we have known as *Geophilus fucorum seurati* but is probably more correctly called *Geophilus gracilis* (Iorio, 2006) and *Stigmatogaster subterranea*. The only other record of the latter was from Ardmaddy Gardens; it tends to be a synanthrope in northern Britain.

The visit to Mull included Torosay Gardens where we were able to collect in the greenhouses. The result of this included a small lithobiid from a glasshouse which was identifiable as a female *Lithobius lucifugus*, a species that had been previously recorded from a kirkyard at Cramond, Edinburgh (Barber, 1995). It is generally regarded as an alpine species and a record from Côtes d'Armor in northern France has been considered by Etienne Iorio (loc.cit.) to be perhaps an error of identification.

A visit was also made to Lismore Island where eight species had previously been recorded by Gordon Corbet in 2001 (unpublished). All but one of these (*Strigamia maritima*) were found on this visit and in addition *Lithobius macilentus*.

A number of different shoreline sites were examined, indicated both in the records of *Strigamia maritima* which sometimes occurred in very large numbers and the relatively large number of records of *Lithobius melanops* which reflect both maritime, garden and urban collecting.

Of non-maritime geophilomorphs, *Geophilus insculptus*, *G. easoni* and *G. flavus* were widespread as were the two smaller forms *G. truncorum* and *Schendyla nemorensis*. Of the lithobiomorphs, *Lithobius variegatus* seems to be patchily distributed along the coast of western Scotland, *L. forficatus* is the common large brown lithobiid of most of Britain although only 6 out of 10 10km grid squares yielded it compared with 8/10 for *L. melanops* and the parthenogenetic *L. macilentus* was only found on Lismore Island.

Removing from the list the littoral types and *Lithobius lucifugus* leaves us with only 10 species, a relatively poor number. A 2004 report on the myriapods of the Outer Hebrides produced a comparable number (11 non-maritime species including *Lithobius borealis*, *L. crassipes* and the summer/autumn *Lamycetes emarginatus*) whilst a collection in Wester Ross and Skye in 2003 was similar (12 with the same additions) (Corbet, 2004, Barber, 2004). The likelihood of other species from the present study area is high if a further range of sites were sampled, possibly at a different time of year and the three lithobiomorphs just mentioned are possibilities but the total number will clearly never be comparable with southern England, for instance.

Table 2: Centipede species recorded from the Oban area. N = number of 10km squares

Species	Site Code																				N	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
<i>Stigmatogaster subterranea</i>			x								x										1	
<i>Schendyla nemorensis</i>				x									x								2	
<i>Strigamia maritima</i>		x	x	x	x	x			x			x		x	x	x					5	
<i>Geophilus easoni</i>		x				x				x		x	x								5	
<i>Geophilus insculptus</i>	x	x				x		x			x		x	x	x					x	7	
<i>Geophilus gracilis</i>			x																		1	
<i>Geophilus flavus</i>	x			x		x			x	x					x				x	x	x	6
<i>Geophilus truncorum</i>									x	x			x		x						4	
<i>Lithobius variegatus</i>				x									x							x	3	
<i>Lithobius forficatus</i>				x					x			x	x						x	x	x	6
<i>Lithobius melanops</i>	x	x		x		x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x			x	x	x	x	8
<i>Lithobius macilentus</i>														x							1	
<i>Lithobius lucifugus</i>						x															[1]	

REFERENCES

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